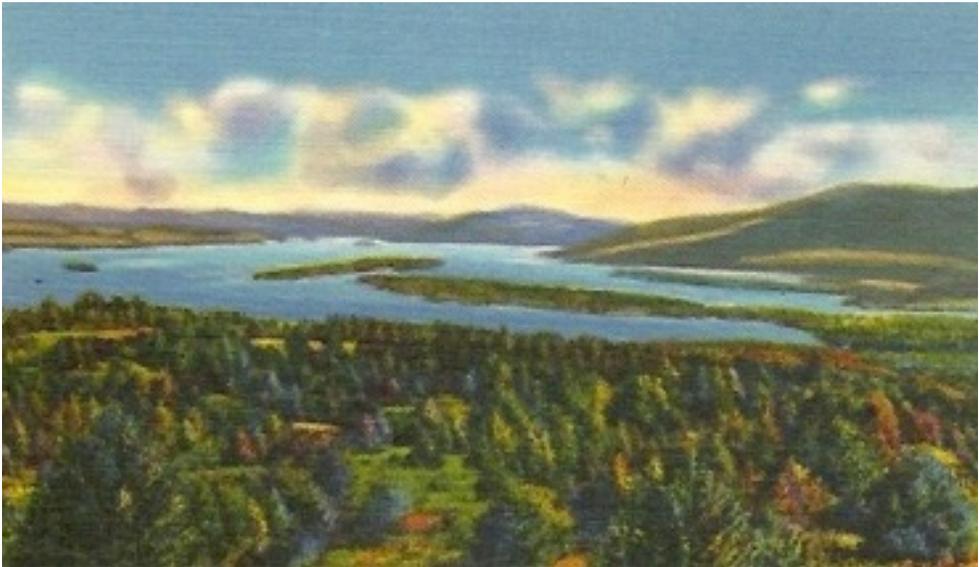


ASSEMBLY POINT  
IN THE 20TH CENTURY



BY ROBERT W. ADAMSON



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*January 2001*

*Reprinted 2016*



*Dedicated to Bob Holmes*

*whose constant and gentle encouragement inspired me to proceed with this book*

*With special thanks to my wife, Katharine, who has not only been my companion for well over 55 years, but also doubles as my editor.*

*And with gratitude to my daughter, Judith, who compiled materials and designed this book.*

*We thank the Lake Champlain Basin Program for its assistance in republishing this book.*



## *Foreword*

The *Assembly Point Water Quality Coalition* (APWQC) gratefully thanks the Lake Champlain Basin Program for its support in re-publishing this book by Dr. Robert Adamson for inclusion in a welcome packet for newcomers to Assembly Point. By renewing this publication and making it available to area residents we hope to inspire a reversal of a two-fold loss presently occurring in the southern basin of Lake George.

I refer to the *loss of original Adirondack values* and the *loss of our pristine Adirondack nature and water quality*. We aim to create awareness and preservation of the exquisite and fragile nature still around us, inherited as a gift to contemporary generations from centuries of careful stewardship by the original Indians as well as our parents. We hope to promote that *vibrant community and friendliness* at the root of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century Assembly Point history as described by Dr. Adamson in this book. These are foundation values of this precious sliver of land on one of America's most pristine lakes.

Preventing the further decay of nature and community is the responsibility of all who live alongside the shores of this Lake. Our natural and cultural environments and their histories are really *one*. We are neither city nor suburb. We are unique! That uniqueness is vividly displayed not only in our lovely Lake, its mountains and trees, but no less impressively by the type of people who have taken care of our peninsula, from the

Sanfords and the Coolidge brothers to all the other families and their descendants who, in the spirit of public service, benevolent neighborliness, and care for and enjoyment of nature have made a difference. That spirit of stewardship is at the heart of the "Otyokwa" concept which runs through Bob Adamson's fanciful but thoughtful book. We enthusiastically support all activities that promote the quality of the waters of Lake George as well as its human community.

Dr. Rolf Ahlers, Knox Road, Assembly Point

## *Preface*

My father's mother, Ernestine Fowler, acquired a tract of lake front property sometime in 1917. It was ten miles from Glens Falls where she had been born, raised, and in turn, raised her four children. The family went to the Lake every summer, a couple of goats tied to the back of their car for fresh milk to help my father's anemia. By the time her children were grown with families of their own, my grandmother split the land and gave each of her children 130 feet of magnificent lake front property.

My father, in his late eighties at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, wanted my help intertwining his own treasured memories of family and Lake with a history of Assembly Point, and I agreed to edit this unlikely combination into this short book, completed in 2001. It is not a complete history of the Point, rather it rests on the shoulders of my father's Assembly Point mentors and friends, Robert Ervien II and Robert Holmes. Both wrote area histories that go into more detail of the area before the 20<sup>th</sup> century. My father's history, as you will note, includes occasional references to their research and gives a nod to local historian Howard Mason who wrote the iconic *Backward Glances* (1963).

In an attempt not to repeat their excellent research, my father concentrates on his own memories of parents, family and those who took the Point into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is a folksy, but simultaneously historically accurate and reimagined interpretation through the lens of his own experience as a boy, teenage speedboat aficionado, Assembly Point realtor, and family man. My father in his professional life went on to work as senior editor for Cambridge University Press, obtaining during that career

his long sought Ph.D. in philosophy of religion. In his sixties he founded Fordham University's still extant "College At Sixty" for adults returning to university.

Upon reflection what really is history? It is both fact but often, it is subject to new information suppressed or unearthed, and it reconfigures into something of a different dimension. Both personal experience and an oral tradition become significant in piecing together the past.

In the spirit of the truth in storytelling, my father blended his passion for local history with his palpable love of his own life on the Lake, and, using imagination and conjecture he imparted this to his children from the vantage of the west side of our Assembly Point cottage.

Archaeologists agree that Assembly Point was never home to permanent Indian settlements but was a seasonal hunting and fishing ground with encampments from prehistory up to and including the Iroquois. During this time, the Algonquin word for the Lake was *Andia Te Roc Te*, meaning "between the mountains." In the 18th century book, *The Travels of Peter Kalm*, (1770) botanist Kalm writes of an encounter most likely off the end of Assembly Point by early whites with Indians, possibly Mohawk, Mohican or Algonquin.

My father and his friend Bob Ervien used to find arrowheads on the shorelines of the west side of Assembly Point and imagined the possibility of small hunting longhouses or *wigwams* where their cottages stood.

Through my father's eyes we glimpsed the major battles at the head of Lake George such as Bloody Morning Scout (1755), the fall of Fort William Henry



Photo courtesy Thomas Weinman

(1757) and the consequent sinking by the British of their own war bateaux and radeaux. Some of these are still preserved in their watery graves, over which we established our own water skiing routes. He led us to envision the improbable beauty and drama of Abercrombie's 1758 failed attempt to take Ft. Carillon despite successfully transporting thousands of troops in bateaux, "so thick you could walk across the lake on them," and return in disgrace past Assembly Point having lost 3000 men.

Through his eyes we watched Henry Knox in 1775 floating fifty-nine massive cannon and mortars from Ticonderoga on rafts, past Assembly Point to Lake George Village and overland to Boston to bombard the British, a revolutionary war battle off Diamond Island, Benjamin Franklin on his way to Canada to negotiate an alliance in 1776, and General Washington inspecting Ticonderoga in 1783. My father knew that Governor DeWitt Clinton had been given a land grant for partial ownership of Assembly Point which he used as a hunting ground. All this history is documented in Robert Ervien's book about early Assembly Point and can be found at [www.assemblypointassociation.org/ervien](http://www.assemblypointassociation.org/ervien). Other local historians such as Bob Holmes also wrote about the Point. Our own local archaeologists, Tom and Paul Weinman, have undertaken digs at the narrowest part of the Point and have provided valuable clues to early history. Howard Mason was an early 20<sup>th</sup> century chronicler of Queensbury history. His book, *Backward Glances*, is available through the Warren County Historical Society. My father's book was his last labor of love before he died in 2003. The Lake was his passion, and this is his tribute, part scholarly, part whimsical and subjective. He himself was a mix of so many parts.

My father and his brother, Charlie, lived here and loved the water as young men and sportsmen. They were mindful of the history that preceded them from Native Americans forward, and they were cognizant of their great privilege in living on the

Lake, which both felt was a magnificent, living, breathing animate being. They were outspoken advocates for lake preservation.

We have included an epilogue by my sister who together with others has created a non-profit water quality coalition (Assembly Point Water Quality Coalition) to address the degeneration in our famously admired, pure Lake George drinking waters. I like to think that Dad and Uncle Charlie would have been proud of the current activism and the efforts “seven generations out” to preserve the Lake.

Judith Adamson, Lake Parkway, Assembly Point

## Chapter I

### *The Formation of Forty Acres*

Assembly Point probably owes more to General Burgoyne's mistress, Fanny Loescher and to the Tory, Phillip Skene, than to any other heroine or hero of the American Revolution. The two, for different reasons, persuaded British General Burgoyne not to retreat to Lake George from Whitehall but to rebuild the 30 mile road to Fort Edward, which had just been destroyed by the American General Phillip Schuyler. An army of several thousand under Burgoyne advanced scarcely a mile a day. Had the British army instead been ordered back to Ticonderoga at the northern end of Lake George and from there continued by water the 32 miles to Lake George Village, precious days would have been saved. In that case, the remaining ten miles to Fort Edward and the Hudson River was but a day's march over the unobstructed terrain of the "great carrying place."

Selfishly ill-advised by Phillip Skene, who knew the area as his home, General Burgoyne decided to march directly from Whitehall to Fort Edward, which seemed sensible. He had, however, failed to foresee either the Herculean task his troops would need to undertake rebuilding the bridges and clearing the hundreds of trees felled by the retreating General Schuyler to block this route, or that his advance would be slowed to a

mile a day. Phillip Skene, however, compensated for his bad advice and the long delay by offering his "Great Stone House" (now a museum at Whitehall) as headquarters for Burgoyne, his staff, and Fanny Loescher, while the army labored at clearing the route.

Burgoyne's procrastination was a godsend to New England farmers, allowing them time to enlist in great numbers and rush to Saratoga to support General Gates and his ever growing force to oppose Burgoyne's advance and halt the three-fold campaign. Among the American volunteers was sixteen-year-old Jonathan Coolidge of Ashburnham, Massachusetts. While young Coolidge was on duty in the Saratoga region in the days before the defeat of Burgoyne in October 1777, he fell in love with the area, especially the farmland and the sparkling waters of the Hudson River. Many years later, the memory of the area lured him back. He bought a farm in Easton on the east shore of the Hudson overlooking the site of the Americans' great victory over General Burgoyne.

Once more, Jonathan fell in love, but this time with a young neighbor, Anna Burdick, whom he married on April 15, 1797. The two set about cultivating their land and raising a family in Easton. Two daughters were born, and on August 2, 1803, their first son was born. They named him Jonathan II after his father.

By this time, Jonathan had explored the winding Hudson River and followed its course to Glens Falls, then north on the ten mile "great carrying place" to the shores of the beautiful lake, which had been named "Lac du Saint Sacrament" by Father Jogues, around 1646. In 1755, Colonel William Johnson re-named it Lake George in honor of King George II of England.

Traveling a few miles up the west side of the Lake, Jonathan came to a high hill north of today's Diamond Point in Bolton. It looked easterly over the widest expanse of the Lake.

Here he bought 250 wooded acres on which, in 1804, he and his wife, Anna, built their family home. From what is now called "Coolidge Hill," they could look two miles across crystal, clear water to see a mile-long island in the southern basin of the Lake. Behind it and protected by it from the north winds, was a long, beautiful peninsula, now known as Assembly Point.

In time, Jonathan Coolidge II grew up and married Mary Wright (c. 1830). He became a respected and responsible leader of the township of Bolton, which included Long Island, a stone's throw from the tip of Assembly Point. One of his early civic duties was that of "Overseer of the Poor" at the County Poor House at Warrensburg. According to notes among my mother Ernestine Fowler Adamson's papers, "he found there a young boy, George Lee, whose parents could not look after him properly. Jonathan became so attached to the boy that he took him to live with his own family in Bolton."

George Lee grew up as the oldest son of Jonathan Coolidge II. He looked after, and later joined corporate ventures with his two brothers Thomas S. and Jonathan M. Coolidge III. After the Civil War, the "Coolidge boys" were engaged in business in Glens Falls where they partnered with Warren Smith in developing the pulp mill at Ticonderoga into a paper mill for the International Paper Company. International Paper was incorporated in Albany in 1898 with the amalgamation of 17 different pulp and paper mills. The Coolidge paper mill in Ticonderoga joined IPC in 1926.

In the mid 1870's George Lee, Thomas S. Coolidge and Jonathan Coolidge III, on visiting their father, pointed out a meadow they could see from Bolton across the Lake on the peninsula. The meadow belonged to Warren's father, Major F. Smith. Around 1860, Major Smith had acquired 20 acres of the north end, which for many years he used as pasture for his sheep. They told their father that Major Smith felt he was too

old to bring his sheep each summer from Harrisena – about ten miles away – for grazing, and he wanted to sell the pasture. What did their father think of them buying the meadow as a place to grow cedar trees for Warren Smith's mill at Ticonderoga?

Their father's response was not only positive, but also he encouraged them to buy 20 more acres bringing it up to 40 acres. Coincidentally, he had recently run into James Harris, owner of the Point's 100 acre farm, who mentioned he would like to sell the 20 acres north of the stone wall since they were not needed for the orchard he was developing.

Greatly encouraged, the Coolidge boys and Warren Smith negotiated the purchase of the 40 acres. In the negotiations, Major Smith reserved a little more than an acre on which he would soon build a summer cottage for himself, (formerly the Binley's summer home and now Mastoloni's property).

In the early 1880's, as we learn from Howard Mason in his iconic *Backward Glances*, "Thomas S. Coolidge, Jonathan M. Coolidge, George W. Lee of Glens Falls and Warren Smith of Ticonderoga bought these 20 acres from Major Smith. Soon after, the four friends bought 20 additional acres from Mr. and Mrs. Harris just south of Major Smith's 20 acres. This placed the south line at the stone wall in the rear of the caretaker's house at the beginning of Crossover Lane.

There has long been speculation as to when the land on the Point was cleared for cultivation. We feel that it is a safe conclusion that there was a farm on Lot #4 in the 1840's and possibly in the 1830's. It seems probable that this farm was located just to the south of the stone wall, referred to in various deeds of that day as beginning at a '....pair of black ash bar posts....' and extending westerly across the Point (to the rear of the caretakers house). This farm may have been the work of Benjamin Fuller, James Ripley, or Asa Sherman, or possibly all three of these

men. Benjamin Fuller had "occupied" Lot #4 prior to 1833, and Ripley had "occupied" it prior to 1844."

In 1868 Quartus Curtis sold the land from the stone wall south to James Warren Harris where he and his wife, Rosetta, built a home they called Sunnyside on the east side. In the summer Sunnyside became a boarding house for up to 20 visitors. With over 60 acres, Harris maintained a substantial farm. Guests loved to walk up Sunset Hill and enjoy an expansive view of the Lake and mountains.

In 1876, there were only three houses on the Point, two of which were just above the canal. The canal itself was a shortcut used by fishermen coming from Dunham's Bay who wanted to get into Harris Bay. A rowboat could not be rowed through it but there was enough water to pull the boat through. It brought into question whether Assembly Point had once been an island. Forty years later, my sister and I would test this theory.

Before continuing with the history of "Forty Acres," let us turn to the story of Dr. Drurie Sanford's picturesque development of Long Island and his 19th century vision of "a great escape."

## Chapter II

### *Dr. Sanford Develops Long Island*

Not only does Assembly Point owe much to General Burgoyne's procrastination, but it is deeply indebted to Dr. Drurie S. Sanford of Long Island City, New York.

In 1871, five years before the Coolidges and Warren Smith bought "Forty Acres," Drurie Sanford at age 26 bought Long Island, the largest island in Lake George. Its 100 acres were central to the two dozen hotels and boarding houses dotting the shoreline of the Lake's southern basin. To these hotels came families seeking closeness to nature as an escape from the hot city streets of New York and other cities. "For many summers after Dr. Sanford took possession of his island, he and his wife worked together to make it a property of woodland beauty. It was a long task but a most delightful one for both of them." (Ervien p. 43)

Eventually the Sanfords completed a three-mile rockbound path encircling the island. "It closely followed the shoreline, with rustic bridges over marshy places .... Seats were placed at convenient intervals and stone steps where they were needed." (Ervien p. 43)

Each summer, Dr. and Mrs. Sanford came by train to the Delaware and Hudson Railroad dock at Lake George Village and from there traveled six miles by water to their Long Island paradise. Their artistry had perfected their property, and now a

generous outreach to other visitors to the Lake seemed a must. This motive to share their good fortune and closeness to nature goes far to explain the announcement in Stoddard's "Lake George Guide" that the Lake George Assembly would begin at the north end of the island in July 1887:

*The Lake George Assembly will occupy the north end of Long Island for a series of Chautauqua camp meetings beginning in July and continuing through the greater part of August. It is intended to make this a permanent affair, if a sufficient interest is shown, the use of that section of the island having been granted by the owner, Dr. D.S. Sanford, for that purpose.*

But the Long Island location for the grand purpose was not to be. Dr. Sanford changed his mind about locating the Lake George Assembly on his Long Island. Long Island had to be reached either by lake steamers bringing passengers to a large dock he had built on the northern end of the island or by canoes or rowboats from numerous hotels providing a mile or so of paddling or rowing for families enjoying a more rigorous trip to "the great escape."

By 1888, the owners of the northern 40 acres of the then-named West Point – the three Coolidge men and Warren Smith – were so actively engaged in their executive roles in corporations in Glens Falls that to meet their business obligations and yet simultaneously devote much needed time to the developing of West Point's Forty Acres was impossible. Instead, as it turned out, frequent contacts among Warren Smith, the Coolidges and Dr. Sanford led to a decision to invite Dr. Sanford to use "Forty Acres" as an alternative, more protected, location for his "Assembly" of hotel visitors. Further, the owners asked him to consider a new purpose: the sale of shore lots on which owners would build their second, or summer homes, as a nucleus of a

community of permanent friends. He would be given a free hand to develop the Point area and beautify it with lakeshore "promenades" as Mrs. Sanford and he had done on Long Island. Dr. Sanford readily accepted the invitation and welcomed the added purpose, especially as it helped to distinguish his new venture from the transient feature of the Chautauqua movement.

### Chapter III

#### *The Lake George Assembly Corporation Comes to the Point*

Dr. Sanford was undoubtedly well pleased with the invitation to move the location for his Lake George Assembly to the unsettled Forty Acres. One of the first things he did was to change the name from West Point to Assembly Point. As Howard Mason remarks, "Assembly Point is the name which today is commonly applied to nearly all the area separated from the mainland by Dunham's Bay Creek."

In this book, I will focus on the northernmost end of the Point – the Forty Acres.

As part of his preparation for the July 1888 Lake George Assembly opening to guests of the two dozen neighboring Lake George hotels, Dr. Sanford invited T.S. Coolidge (representing his partners Jonathan Coolidge, George Lee and Warren Smith) to walk with him around Forty Acres and critique his plans for updating the Point.

One Sunday early in the spring of 1888, T.S. Coolidge traveled the ten mile plank road from Glens Falls to Lake George Village in his horse-drawn carriage. Leaving his carriage at the Fort William Henry stables, he met Dr. Sanford and together the good friends traveled in drurries – small launches – the five-

plus picturesque miles to Assembly Point. Their first destination was a worn-out passenger dock for lake steamers. It was roughly 1800 feet south of the tip of the Point (Jensen and Mann properties).

Leaving Dr. Sanford's boat at the deteriorating "Big Dock," T.S. and Dr. Sanford proceeded east on a narrow wagon lane, today's paved Crossover Lane, for a very short distance, barely 300 feet. Here the men would have stopped and turned to look at the stone wall marking the southern border of Forty Acres, some 70-odd feet to their right. Pointing to the open area, Dr. Sanford might have begun, "In this open space I'm thinking of building a year-round farmhouse for a future caretaker .... " And so it was that by the next year, spring 1889, the Granger house was built (Cardinale property). By the time my family was spending summers at Lake George from 1950 on, it still stood, although crumbling with time and lack of care.

Then looking north across the lane, Dr. Sanford might have said, "If all goes according to plan we'll cut a ten-foot wide dirt path through the meadow to the site that I believe will be ideal for an open sided Lectorium capable of seating over 200 people. The site was about 200 feet east, behind the former Leeser house (Flanagan property). Dr. Sanford continued, "This wide path will extend to the beach at the tip of the Point, from which, close to the shore on the east side will be a ten-foot wide promenade which we'll call "Sunrise Promenade," extending to the hotel, now being built by my friend, William Frommel, from Brooklyn, on property his wife recently bought from James Harris. On the lake side (west) a second promenade, Sunset Promenade, will hug the shore as it leads from the Point back to the dock where we tied our boat."

T.S. Coolidge would have responded enthusiastically "Your plan sounds good, and I believe you intend to make somewhat narrower paths from the stone wall down the west-

ern lake shore belonging to the Harris farm, then on to the Miniard Woods' shoreline, as far as the isthmus. Your promenades, with their rustic shelters and seats, will be as beautiful as those you've shown me on your island. Now let's consider how you will go about starting a community of summer cottages, which families will return to year after year. "

"I thought you might ask this," said Dr. Sanford.

"After the Sunset Promenade is completed, I plan four cottages: one for Mr. Tibbetts as his summer home and office from which he will publish "The Lake George Mirror"; north of him a second cottage primarily for rental income, and a third next to that will be a cottage for the resident manager. I'm happy to report that my brother, Clarence Sanford, has volunteered to help in this role. The fourth and last cottage will house the Reverend George B. Hultz and family, from Brooklyn, potentially one of the contributors to the religious dimension of the Lake George Assembly."

Much of what T.S. Coolidge and Dr. Sanford discussed began to take shape immediately. Dr. Sanford engaged in the task with enthusiasm. By July of the first summer (1888), people began to flock to the Lectorium site where they sat on outdoor chairs, since the building could not be completed until the 1889 season.

## Chapter IV

### *Dr. Sanford's Leadership*

On June 30, 1890 a decision of major consequence to the Assembly Point of the 20th century was made. Papers of that date witness the incorporation of the Lake George Assembly as a stock corporation with all the legal rights and duties of a "Person."

In the process of reaching the decision, the owners of Forty Acres had had to weigh the pros and cons of finding a buyer other than Dr. Sanford for the whole plot with the risk to Lake George of a developer less concerned than Dr. Sanford about maintaining the natural beauty of the Point. The alternative was to win Dr. Sanford over to the idea of selling shore lots for summer homes, supporting his three goals of Religion, Reason, and Recreation.

Records, correspondence and minutes of the Corporation are missing from its founding in 1890 to the period before 1914 when the leadership of the Point shifted from Dr. Sanford to T.S. Coolidge. Possibly, they were lost in a fire that destroyed Dr. Sanford's island home some years after his death. Still, something is known of the records. At least 1,000 shares of stock (possibly more) at \$10 a share were authorized. The 40 acres owned by the Glens Falls businessmen were valued at \$8,000 and being assigned to the new corporation were exchanged for 200 shares each in the names of T.S. and Jonathan Coolidge, George Lee and Warren Smith. Dr. Sanford, or his family corpo-

ration, known as Sanford Sales of Long Island City, NY was also issued 200 shares in recognition of his supervisory work in building the promenades, Lectorium, caretaker's house as well as the four dachas (summer homes).

Because Dr. Sanford was in close contact with the Coolidges and Warren Smith, he undoubtedly contributed in advance to their plans for incorporation. He also would have shared the knowledge that such incorporation permitted all five principals to become directors and that it was the will of the four Glens Falls businessmen that Dr. Sanford become President.

Dr. Sanford's leadership was multi-faceted. First of all would have been his understanding of the four-fold purpose of the Lake George Assembly as he had formulated it during weeks of thought and then published as an illustrated document in 1889.

Clues to his first purpose, Religion, lie in the illustration of an open Bible on the first page of the document, along with his supporting statement:

*The Bible is our corner stone; and, friend, if you don't believe the general trend of its teachings, (we might as well be frank with you) we don't think you will find congenial company here. We do not say, do not come, for we know that Saul of Tarsus became Paul of Damascus.*

Religion was to be implemented by Sunday services in the new Lectorium by eminent and popular clergymen.

The second "R", Reason or "increased knowledge" is pictured by a stack of books on music, art, science and literature to be scheduled in the Lectorium on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday afternoons at 4 p.m. Specifically, Dr. Sanford notes:

Tuesdays -- lectures or readings  
Thursdays -- poetry, music and art  
Saturdays -- recreational amusements

The third "R", Recreation, would consist of nature walks along two ten-foot wide lakeshore promenades from which horses were excluded. Picnics could be brought to small shelters, dubbed "rustic sofas."

*Twenty of the rustic sofas have been worked in among the trees, and there cannot be found nicer, cozier or more picturesque spots in which to chat, read, sew, write or even smoke.*

The fourth goal is confirmed in Dr. Sanford's unique style:

*It is expected to found a colony of such people only, who, while sum-  
mering amidst the beauties of nature, wish to dwell where, through  
occasional lectures and religious services, coupled with recreational  
idleness as well as sports, they may be built up physically, mentally  
and spiritually.*

Finally, in the 1889 document he reminds the reader what the Lake George Assembly means:

*The Lake George Assembly means summer rest for families, children  
included; refreshment, health and strength, contact with nature in her  
most intimate moods, in the woods, among rocks and trees with grass  
for carpets and mosses for rugs, with sunshine and shade, society, soli-  
tude, shut within sheltering foliage or with long vistas of mountain  
and lake, home without housekeeping cares, complete giving up of the  
too short summer to lengthening, strengthening life.*

*Why, if people only knew the attractions of Lake George, not to say anything about our feeble efforts to make the Lake George Assembly attractive, the Lake George Assembly woods would be full of them.*

Howard Mason describes his acquaintance with the Point:

*I first saw Assembly Point at age 11 in 1893. My parents, having heard of the development, went there for a Sunday drive and took me along. When we reached the Brooklyn Hotel my father recognized some of the men he knew sitting on the porch. He stopped and had a few words of conversation with them. We then continued our drive around the shore of the new Forty Acres of the Point until we reached the open-air pavilion or Lectorium. There, a meeting was in progress and the Lectorium was well-filled. One thing that impressed me on that Sunday drive was the great number of open-work summer, rustic houses along the paths. They were made of cedar poles with the bark left on. Two seats inside faced each other. I began building one on the farm the very next day.*

On May 31, 1890, the Federal Government accepted an application from the Lake George Assembly and granted it the right to open a post office under the name of "The Lake George Assembly Post Office" with Warren Smith designated as the first Postmaster. A safe site for a new Big Dock at the very tip of Assembly Point, protected from winds by Long Island, led in the 1920's to a friendly, family, summer gathering place, replacing the Lectorium as the center of the Lake George Assembly. Mr. Robert Ervien II describes these 1894-95 innovations picturesquely:

*It is items such as this that help us to form a picture of life as it was in those days. About this time, the stockholders of the Lake George Assembly reluctantly came to the conclusion that another dock must be*

*built and this time at the one and only logical location, at the far north end of the Point. It seems most unlikely that this expensive decision would have been made without the insistence of the Steamboat Company. The dock built only five years earlier was in an exposed location. With a strong southwest, west or northwest wind, it was difficult to land the large lake steamers, which measured just under 200 feet in length. There was constant danger of their being blown ashore when attempting a landing in a wind. The new dock was completed in the spring of 1895. The post office was moved to a new location that same season, close to the new dock, where it was located in the early 1920s as some of us can remember so well. An item in The Mirror that summer reads: "The new pier on the extreme end of Assembly Point is crowded with fishermen, fisher boys and fisher girls nowadays ... some of the bass taken there weighed four and five pounds." (p. 61)*

Dr. Sanford was satisfied with this radical change. He had become Postmaster following Warren Smith's resignation in 1892 and held the office until 1915. He was enthusiastic about the construction of a small, handsome Post Office as well as a larger, attached structure to serve as the community's store, a store to which in time was added a wooden deck where my older sister, Nesta, and her friends enjoyed evenings of dancing in the 1920s.

The Lectorium had been the center of Dr. Sanford's vision for Religion, Reason, and Recreation as the previous chapter, as well as excerpts from his 1889 document, have made us aware. But after eight years of experimentation, the Lectorium Sunday services and weekday lectures came to an end. Through lack of participation, and because of the expense for clergy and professional lecturers, the Lectorium was closed in 1897 and never reopened. It was, however, well-built and stood upright until hit by a tornado in 1923.

I recall that after the building had fallen on its side, the roof, all askew and slanting to the ground, became a temptation for climbing. My sister, Emily, and I and our friends could not resist and were quickly admonished by my father not to slide or climb on the roof. We promptly forgot the admonition and my father, Harold Adamson, then President of the Lake George Assembly, had it removed. (An enticing open field remained, and my children and their many cousins loved making forays into the center of the "loop" as we called it then, to play.)

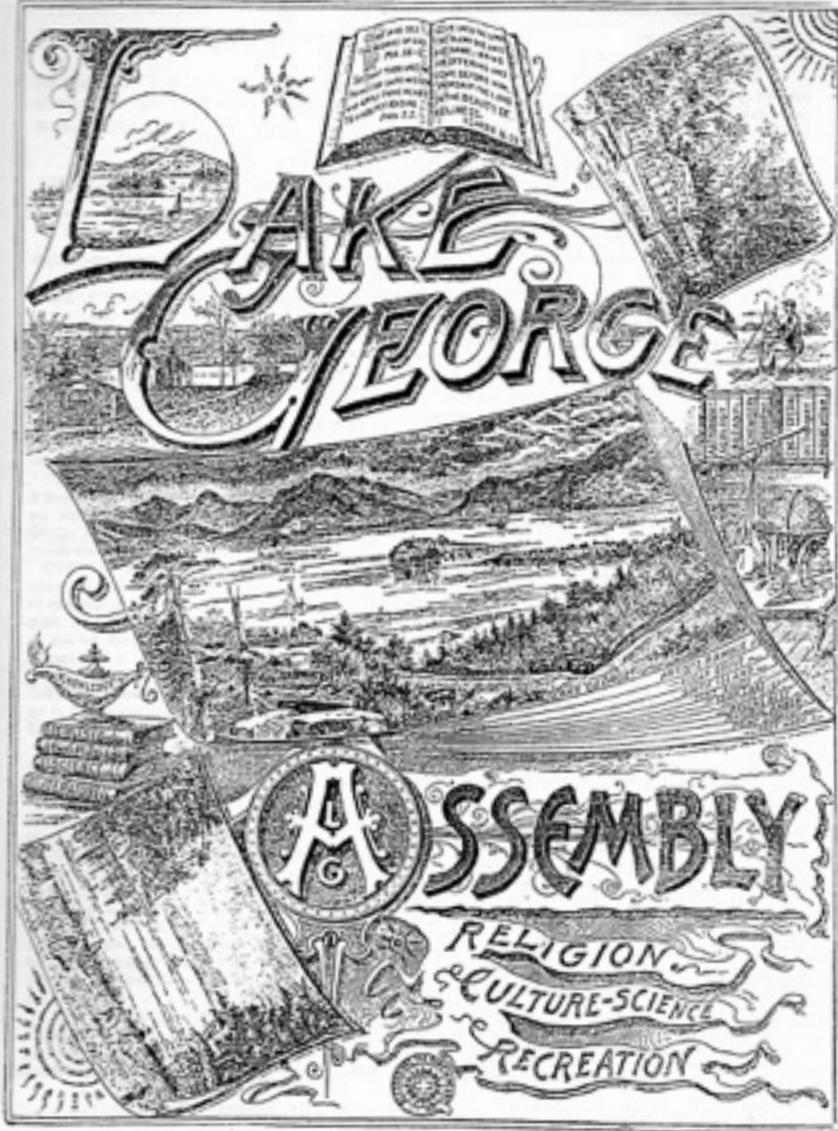
In spite of the demise of the Lectorium, the fact that no lots whatsoever had been sold and the necessity of changing the site of the Assembly Point Center, Dr. Sanford looked forward to the 20th century, and he continued as the President of the Lake George Assembly until 1920, two years after the end of World War I.

The following pages show:

- 1) Men clearing the fields to make the Lectorium
- 2) Dr. Sanford's imaginative brochure showing his fertile and creative purpose for the Lake George Assembly and for a summer cottage nucleus of a family community
- 3) What the Lake George Assembly Means
- 4) Lake George Hotel Directory
- 5) Lake George Assembly Rules, Regulations and Restrictions
- 6) Rules, Regulations, Restrictions in force on Assembly Point



*Clearing the fields on Forty Acres to build the Lectorium*



## LAKE GEORGE ASSEMBLY.

Published by the L. G. A. for the benefit of those desirous of securing summer homes on the shores of Lake George. Where RECREATION,

REASON,

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Summer Homes on the Beautiful Shores of Lake George.

#### WHAT THE LAKE GEORGE ASSEMBLY MEANS.

—The Lake George Assembly means summer rest for families, children included, refreshment, health and strength, contact with nature in her most sublime moods, in the woods, among rocks and trees with grass for carpets and mosses for rugs, with sunshine and shade, society, solitude, about whitish shelving fountains or with long vistas of mountain and lake, home without housekeeping cares, complete giving up of the too short summer to lengthening, strengthening life.

**THE ATTRICTIONS OF LAKE GEORGE.**—Why, if people only knew the attractions of Lake George, not to say anything about our feeble efforts to make the Lake George Assembly attractive, the Lake George Assembly would be full of them.

**OUR CORNER STONE.**—The Bible is our corner stone; and, friend, if you don't believe the general trend of its teachings, (we might as well be frank with you) we don't think you will find congenial company here. We do not say, do not come, for we know that Saul of Tarsus became Paul of Damascus.

**ILLUSTRATED.**—The plan, plan and scope of the Lake George Assembly is three-fold, and may be summed up in as many words, viz: RECREATION, REASON, RELIGION. Our title page pictorially illustrates this.

**TO FOUND A COLONY.**—It is expected to found a colony of such people only, who, while summering amid the beauties of nature, wish to dwell where, through occasional lectures and religious services, coupled with recreational interests as well as sports, they may be built up physically, mentally and spiritually.

**ABOVE THE SEA.**—Lake George, 350 feet above the sea, just elevation enough to strengthen, refresh and invigorate, and amid such inspiration as everywhere possesses you, one cheats himself of rest-days.

**SOLID ENJOYMENT.**—No more natural place for social enjoyment and rest as well as cultivation of mind; for making the body young, fit and at ease, if young. All the resources of Nature for rest and quiet are here by day and night.

**GOOD NEIGHBORS.**—It is quite as firm to have good neighbors, is it not? Well, the restrictions put on this property secure them. No liquor can be sold on the premises and no annoyance of any kind will be allowed.

**DO NOT WINK THE OTHER KIND.**—Assembly Point is to be a summer home for agreeable people. Do not wish the other kind.

**MAP.**—We have a nice map of our property, but you need not send for it—of course it looks well on paper—but come, see and judge for yourself. Look at it through four eyes, not one. Judge us by our works.

**SUPERB VIEW.**—Next summer there will be a path leading directly from the dock to the summit of Sunset Hill, on which there will be a large summer house erected, and from which a superb view of Lake George can be obtained, at but little effort say a pleasant five minutes walk, mostly through little groves and over a rustic bridge.

**LECTORIUM.**—The L. G. A. have coined a word for their lecture hall, viz:—Lectorium; it carries its meaning in its face.

**NO GREAT THINGS.**—The L. G. A. are attempting no great things; simply aiming to secure the endorsement of the well-meaning people residing within the counties bordering the honored shores.

**RUSTIC SOFAS.**—Twenty of the rustic sofas have been worked in among the trees, and there cannot be found nicer, under or more picturesque spots in which to chat, read, sew, write or even smoke.

**POPULAR LECTURES.**—During the Assembly season of 1890, July 20 to September 7, there will be Lectures, or Concerts, or something amusing or recreational every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday afternoon at 4 P. M.

**TUESDAYS.**—Lectures or Readings.

**THURSDAYS.**—Poetry, Music or Art.

**SATURDAYS.**—Recreational Amusements.

No collections are taken at the lectures or concerts. The Lake George Assembly are in hopes that a free lecture course may be established here every summer and that the royalties on all business done there, including a fractional part of the gross receipts from the sale of lots, may produce revenue enough to defray the expense of its educational, religious and recreational work; at all events the management will sincerely regret if this should prove to be impracticable and that they should have to charge a small admission fee to the ground.

**RELIGIOUS SERVICES.**—Every Sunday during the Assembly season (July 20 to September 7, 1890 both inclusive), by eminent or popular clergymen.

**BROAD AND LIBERAL.**—As the L. G. A. is to be developed on broad and comprehensive lines, they do not propose exercising a severe censorship over the utterances on their platform, and do not wish to be held responsible for, or as endorsing all the sentiments which may be enunciated at its Lectures, provided, however, that all speakers and everybody else must bear in mind, that the L. G. A. is Christian first, last and all the time.

**WILL LAND AT THE DOCK.**—The regular and excursion steamers land passengers at the L. G. A. dock.

**NO PRISON OR REFORMATORY.**—As we do not propose having either in our little village, we do not invite the intemperate, the profane, the vulgar or malicious to become cottagers with us, at least not until after they have exchanged all these things.

**SUMMER REFRESHMENT.**—The Lake George Assembly is a wise provision for summer refreshment; under picnic and private, a little of both; enough to secure agreeable people and keep the other sorts out.

**THE PROPER THING TO DO.**—If you are a busy business man, come late and eat. The proper thing for you to do is to do nothing and take your children in.

**WHAT SHALL WE WEAR.**—Why, whatever is comfortable. We do, and we hope that is one reason why we are not external's attraction.

**BRING YOUR CAMPING GEAR AND THE CHILDREN.**—Some one asks: Can we camp there? Certainly on private place on each. Yes, bring your own tenting paraphernalia if you have it. Those camping on the grounds will be charged ten cents per day, per tent. Children, God bless them, we don't count their heads. Not but what they are of a good deal of account and then again, we could not make our camp a Heaven on Earth without them, so don't leave the darlings home.

**COTTAGE SITES FOR SALE.**—One hundred dollars will buy a nice lot, yet now. Five hundred dollars will get a nice little summer cottage on it. We do not permit any built, costing less than \$200, as we want everything neat, quick and spot, and mind that we do not permit the building of a cottage that costs more than \$2,000. We do not wish any nabal lording it over the rest of us poor fellows, nor that we should envy him his elegance, but possibly he might envy us the happiness and enjoyment found in our modest homes. Happiness is not always in proportion to the size and magnificence of our houses.

**MUST BUILD BEFORE JULY 1, 1890.**—Lots within the Assembly grounds, containing an area of from 1000 to 2500 square feet, will be sold, only to those who will build thereon before July 1, 1890, at from \$40 to \$100 per lot, according to location, size, etc. These prices may be advanced without notice.

**SOUL SUBJECT TO RULES OF LAKE GEORGE ASSEMBLY.**—All lots sold will be subject to the rules, restrictions and regulations which may be formulated by the management for the better protection of the rights, comfort and interest of the entire colony. We shall be glad to have you as one of our colonists, providing your life is squared by the golden rule, and if you can be neighborly, pleasant, reasonable and considerate. If you cannot be that do not join us.

**DON'T COME.**—If you are quarrelsome, caustic, or disagreeable, do not come into the circle of our happy homes, that is what we wish for here—happy homes.

**SORRY FOR YOU.**—If you have a special faculty of always rubbing people against the grain, sorry for you, friend, but not sorry enough to desire you in our home circles.

**THE L. G. A.**—is not a religious camp meeting in the ordinary acceptance of the term.

**EVANGELICAL.**—always—sectarian never.

**DON'T EXPECT.**—to find a Round Lake or Chautauque here. We are just beginning. They have been a mass of years in reaching their present high standard of excellence.

**LAW AND ORDER.**—Will in all things be preserved on Assembly Point.

**LOTS SOLD ONLY.**—to those who agree to build before the Assembly season of 1890, July 20th, September 7th.

**AS THERE IS NO POLITICS**

in religion, and not much religion in politics; and

**AS THERE IS NO POLITICS**

in reason, and but little reason in politics; and

**AS THERE IS NO POLITICS**

in recreation, and but little recreation in politics, we

shall not permit politics a place on our platform.

**A HOTEL DIRECTORY.**—As there are no hotels on the Assembly grounds, (it is hoped to have one another season) a hotel directory is given on the back page of this

sheet, some within a few minutes, all within a half-hour's ride on the steamer from the Lake George Assembly Dock, several within easy rowing distance.

**THOSE WISHING TO ESTABLISH BOARDING HOUSES.**—So as to be ready for another year, parties willing to receive respectable boarding houses, may secure such a privilege, which does not cease in the less generally, conditioned however, upon the payment of ten per cent. of gross receipts to the sustenance fund of the Lake George Assembly.

**A HOTEL SITE.**—So also may be secured a hotel privilege, on one of the most attractive sites on the Lake.

**THE OLD, OLD STORY, TOLD AGAIN.**—Romance! No better place for it. We were young ourselves so believe that it is a good thing, in its place of course; not too much of it, just about the proportion that the sweetest thing is a cup of coffee, so propose to provide rustic rombles, lovers' walks etc. Yes, and very cozy nooks where "the old, old story may be told again."

No Extravagance.

No Fashion.

No Mrs. Grundy.

Shall try to get along without these three evils.

**A SMALL COTTAGE NOW IN THE GROUNDS.**—A small cottage, now on the grounds, will contain about 20 seats, for Gentlemen, 60c, 25 cents per night.

**LETTERS.**—Those wishing their mail letters to the Assembly office, should have it addressed, care of Lake George Assembly.

**TENTS TO RENT.**—We shall induce parties to put up a few tents, with bread stoves, not furnished, for rent at 25 cents per day, for tent large enough for two persons, 50 cents per day, for tent large enough for two persons. Preference will be given to those hiring tents for the Assembly season of 1890, July 20th to September 7th, inclusive; perhaps a few days earlier or later if desired. Those should be spoken for 14 days.

**A SUPPLY STORE.**—A store on the grounds will sell groceries, tents, mats, camp stools, wash basins, blankets, pillows, etc., at reasonable prices.

**ROYALTIES ON ALL BUSINESS DONE.**—The Lake George Assembly propose retaining royalties on all business done within its borders. Every cent reaching the sustenance fund can be expended in adding to the attractiveness of its territory, grounds, etc.

**TO GIVE OUR WIVES AND DAUGHTERS A VACATION.**—It is hoped to have dining rooms centrally located so that daughters will find it both convenient and economical to patronize them, and thus save their wives from never-ending woman's work. We further think this is a brilliant idea, to give the women a vacation—and leave their kitchens at home—and thus really get a rest.

**FISHING, ROWING, SAILING, BATHING.**

**PURE WATER.**—Lake George is famed for this.

**PURE AIR.**—ditto.

<b>R</b>	residence,	<b>R</b>	almost
	resort,		40-50
	city,		to
	country,		be
	hotel,		ten
	etc.		on
	residence,		the
	resort,		best
	city,		of
	country,		the
	hotel,		city
	etc.		of
	residence,		the
	resort,		city

Address  
Lake George  
New York

# LAKE GEORGE HOTEL DIRECTORY.

—OF—

## HOTELS WITHIN SIX MILES OF THE LAKE GEORGE ASSEMBLY.

Town	Distance from Lake George Assembly	Name of Hotel	Name of Proprietor	Location from the Dock	Capacity	Terms Per Week	Terms Per Day
Coldwell	4 Miles	El. Wm. Henry	T. E. Brown	On the grounds	700	\$15 to \$20	\$5 00
Coldwell	4 Miles	Crossroads	Crossroads Ho- tel Co.	On the grounds	200	15 to 25	\$ 50 to \$ 60
Coldwell	4 Miles	Lake House	F. G. Tucker	On the grounds	400	14 to 21	\$ 00 to \$ 50
Coldwell	4 Miles	Maple Cottage	Mrs. Quinn	200 feet	30	3 to 10	1 50
Coldwell	4 Miles	Carpenter	J. H. Carpenter	200 feet	25	3 to 22	2 00
Coldwell	4 Miles	Central House	Geo. Brown	200 feet	100	3 to 10	2 00
Coldwell	4 Miles	Arlington	J. T. & G. F. Bryant	25 rods	50	10 to 14	2 00
Hot View	1 1/2 Miles	Diamond Point	John Chickidge	1 mile	60	6 to 10	2 00
Kenndale	1 Mile	Horizon Lodge	Geo. A. Ferris	On the grounds	140	6 to 12	2 00
Kenndale Bay	1 1/2 Miles	Sheldon House	Gordon Shel- don	On the grounds	100	10 to 15	2 50
Kenndale Bay	1 1/2 Miles	East Lake George	Franklin Gates	75 rods	40	7 to 10	1 50
Katkill Bay	1 1/2 Miles	Grove House	E. Weeney	3 mile	75	7 to 10	1 50
Katkill Bay	1 1/2 Miles	Treat Pavilion	J. M. Crankbill	On the grounds	110	6 to 12	2 00
Katkill Bay	1 1/2 Miles	Albion	Rosa Phelps	200 feet	50	10 to 15	2 00 to 2 50
Katkill Bay	1 1/2 Miles	Mayflower Col- lege	Mrs. H. F. Cushman	240 feet	60	7 to 10	1 50
Katkill Bay	1 1/2 Miles	Katkill	A. P. Scoville	75 feet	100	10 to 12	2 00
Post Lane	3 Miles	Victoria Lodge	John W. Harris	1/2 mile	50	7	1 50
The Narrows	4 Miles	100 Island House	R. G. Bradley & Co.	On the grounds	125	10 to 17 50	2 50 to 3 00
The Narrows	4 Miles	Pearl Point	D. W. Sherman	On the grounds	150	12 to 21	3 50
The Narrows	4 Miles	14-Mile Island	D. J. Gilligan	On the grounds	100	10 to 15	4 00 to 5 00
Bolton	5 Miles	Murrian House	D. W. Sherman	On the grounds	400	14 to 25	4 50
Bolton	5 Miles	Agawam	W. H. Middle- worth	1 mile	100	12 to 18	4 00 to 5 00
Bolton	5 Miles	The Sagamore	M. O. Brown	On the grounds	400	17 50 to 25	4 00
Bolton	5 Miles	Bolton House	John Vanden- burg	500 feet	125	10 to 20	2 50 to 5 00
Bolton	5 Miles	Lake View	R. J. Brown	100 feet	125	12 to 18	2 50 to 3 00
Bolton	5 Miles	Locust Grove	Geo. H. Fish	50 rods	75	8 to 15	2 50
Bolton	5 Miles	Wells House	H. A. Deu- styn	40 rods	100	10 to 15	2 50
Bolton	5 Miles	Melrose House	Mrs. C. Win- ston	500 feet	100	12 to 21	4 50

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A LECTURE, CONCERT, STUDY IN ART or something recreational will be given at the LECTORIUM of the L. G. A., on Assembly Point (reached by all steamers), every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday during the Assembly season of 1890, July 20th to September 7th (both inclusive) at 4 P. M.

Lectures, and Concerts FREE.

Visitors welcome.

DIVINE SERVICE every Sunday at 11 A. M. and 4 P. M., between July 20th and Sep- tember 7th 1890 (both inclusive).

Collections taken only on Sundays.

Full particulars given weekly in the Glass Falls papers and by circulars and placards at the Hotels and Post Offices.

Lectorium only 500 feet from the dock.

All persons cordially invited.

Glass Falls, Glass Falls.

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# RULES, REGULATIONS, RESTRICTIONS,

IN FORCE WITHIN THE LIMITS OF THE LAKE GEORGE ASSEMBLY, AND ARE  
IN ADDITION TO THE 13 RULES, IN FORCE ALL OVER ASSEMBLY POINT.

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1. The steamboat dock, roads, paths and promenades, as well as the entire lake frontage of the Lake George Assembly, are private property. All persons are welcome to their free use, provided they conform to the rules, regulations and restrictions governing the property.
  2. Children are not permitted on the dock or dangerous points on the lake front, unless accompanied by parents or guardians.
  3. The Lectorium can be used only for such purposes as meets the approval of the resident manager, and must not be used by children as a playroom.
  4. Brooklyn Road, leading to the dock, is the only present wagon road; the Sunrise and Sunset and other promenades cannot be used for horses and vehicles, except by special permission.
  5. Those driving to the grounds will leave their horses at or near the stable; the hitching of horses to trees is forbidden; horses and cattle are not permitted to run at large anywhere within the limits.
  6. No tree or shrub can be trimmed or removed except by order of resident manager. Cottagers have, of course, full control of all trees and shrub within their own lot lines.
  7. It is forbidden to have over five gallons of kerosene oil in any cottage at any one time; matches and all other combustible materials must be kept in safe places.
  8. Every cottage must be supplied with two galvanized, or otherwise rustless iron, water-tight cans, with cover holding about 20 gallons each, in which shall be put all garbage, swill and other house slops, and shall be kept near the back of the house; which shall be removed and emptied at some specially designated and prepared place, and returned, as often as shall be required by the resident manager of the L. G. A.; the charge for which work, to be borne by the cottager, shall at least cover the reasonable cost of said service.
  9. No slops, swill or other noxious, decaying or fermenting thing (liquid or solid) shall be thrown upon any part of the grounds, public or private.
  10. A charge of \$3.00 per year will be made against each cottage, by the foreman of the grounds, who will make at least a weekly inspection of them during the period of their non-occupancy, and will notify the owner if address is left with him, in the event of anything going amiss or needing special attention; but assumes no greater responsibility than a careful oversight.
  11. The foreman will charge ten cents each for the delivery of all trunks, barrels, or readily portable boxes; and five cents each for valises, satchels, packages, etc., deliverable by hand; he will also deliver ice, in quantities of not less than 15 pounds daily, at the rate of forty-five cents per hundred weight.
  12. Cottage owners wishing for special row-boat landings, will have a location designated at which, at their own expense, suitable portable landings may be placed, but these are subject to the approval of, as well as under the control of the Lake George Assembly, and although they cannot be marked or held as private, yet it is reasonably expected that everybody will recognize their courtesy rights to use of them; landings at the foot of streets or promenades may be used by anybody, subject, however, to the rules.
  13. Parties wishing for workmen, horses or materials, will be furnished at reasonable rates, on application to the foreman.
  14. No baggage, freight or express packages to be removed from the dock until all charges thereon are paid.
  15. The store will be in charge of the foreman, and all accounts must be settled weekly.
  16. Persons having complaints to make, against anything that is remediable by the L. G. A., will please do so in writing, to the resident manager.
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Lake George Assembly  
Rules and Regulations  
Nos. 1 to 13

- ~~1 All persons are forbidden to cut or in any way deface or injure the trees or shrubbery.~~
- 2 The peeling of bark from birch trees is forbidden.
- 3 The cutting or marking of names or initials on trees, summer houses or rustic seats is forbidden.
- 4 Do not disfigure summer houses or rustic seats by picking or removing the bark therefrom.
- 5 The sale of malt or spiritous liquors is positively prohibited, and it is expected that visitors will not bring them to the grounds, as
- 6 Disorderliness, intoxication, profanity, vulgarity or rowdiness will not be permitted on the grounds. Those guilty of either will be regarded as trespassers and treated accordingly.
- 7 The use of firearms is also forbidden.
- 8 Parties wishing to camp must obtain special permission and designation of location at the office of the L.G.A.; must be particularly careful of fires; must keep their tents and surroundings neat; must furthermore conform to these rules, and any further requirements of the superintendent of the grounds.
- 9 It is expected the Sabbath Day will be respected and that there will be a complete suspension of all games, sports and practices usually allowed on the grounds.
- 10 As much of Assembly Point is under cultivation, it is expected that there will be no trampling of flower-beds or gardens, or through grain or high grass; and there must be no interference with the fruit orchards.
- 11 As far as possible all persons are requested to use the paths and roads as now laid out, except in those places where it is an open common.
- 12 These rules have been formulated by the L.G.A. for the comfort, convenience and interest of all well-meaning persons (both resident and transient), who have occasion to avail themselves of the privileges conferred; but
- 13 Any person violating these regulations, or acting in a disorderly manner, or guilty of practices tending to interfere with the pleasures and comfort of persons using the property, will be considered as trespassers and treated as such. We sincerely hope that we may never have to resort to such extremity, but shall if occasion requires.

## Chapter V

### *Glens Falls, Hometown U.S.A.*

At the head of Lake George in Lake George Village – a village General Burgoyne never saw – my father, Harold Adamson, was born in the winter of 1881. His father, Dr. William R. Adamson, had graduated from preparatory school in England and then registered for a degree in medicine at Bellevue Hospital Medical College in New York City. Before he was twenty-one, he completed his course but had to wait a year to obtain the papers necessary for his new profession as a doctor.

Having unscheduled time, he investigated this country in order to decide where he would begin his practice. At first he selected Richmond, Virginia. His brother Arthur had come over from England and became a land developer in the southern part of the city. The two brothers lived together briefly. William invested in his brother's land, but made the decision that he would prefer to settle in Lake George Village, which he had visited, and begin his practice there.

He was fortunate in finding the "Mansion House," formerly located on the present site of the Georgian Motel in Lake George Village, as home base from which to carry on his practice. It was located close to the shoreline of the Lake and offered a magnificent view. It also provided a dock from which one could swim after a long day's work. Before long, the now Dr.

Adamson returned to England, married Emily Jane Jackson, daughter of Professor Jackson, Director of his school in Keithly, England, and brought her back to the Mansion House.

In time, three children were born to the William Adamsons: Harold, the oldest, Ethelwynne, two years younger, and a third child who died in infancy.

Dr. Adamson became a leading physician, highly respected in the Lake George/Glens Falls area. When Harold was old enough to begin school, his father and mother moved to New York City. Dr. Adamson carried on his practice there in the winter and Harold added a new grade each year at Trinity School in New York.



*Photo of Harold Adamson taken by Alfred Stieglitz circa 1890. Yale Bieneke Library*

In the summer, the family returned to Lake George where Dr. Adamson resumed his practice on Lake George's west shore. My mother and father told me stories of how my grandfather was the doctor to the Stieglitz family. Alfred once took a photo of young Harold at the Stieglitz estate, Oaklawn. Harold was very proud to be able to accompany his father on his rounds along the Bolton Road. He became adept at caring for his father's horse and carriage as he visited his many patients. Often the doctor and his young son would end the day early enough to swim before the sun sank behind the majestic Adirondack Mountains at about 4 p.m. Harold learned later in life that the opposite shore – the east side of Lake George – was preferable, especially on Assembly Point, where the sun in summer kept shining into the evening hours until 8 or 9 p.m.

When Harold was only fourteen, his father died unexpectedly. He had been on duty and presumably caught an illness from one of his patients from which he did not recover. Harold's mother, Emily Jane Jackson Adamson, bereft and shocked at the loss of her husband, felt she had no alternative but to settle at her summer home in Lake George. This seemed preferable to joining her husband's relatives in Richmond. Once home and on the advice of her many friends, she registered Harold and Ethelwynne in the highly recommended Glens Falls Academy on Warren Street.

It was at the Academy that Harold met an interesting classmate, Ernestine Fowler, the favorite niece of T.S. Coolidge. Emily Jane soon bought a very comfortable house at 90 Ridge Street, just four doors north of the large corner house that Ernestine's parents, now deceased, had wisely bought in the early 1890s. Harold carried Ernestine's books home from school, stayed a few minutes, and accepted her challenge to games of tennis, horseback riding, etc. They were fast becoming good friends and enjoying each other's company.

In 1900, Ernestine and Harold graduated from the Glens Falls Academy, by now fast friends and close neighbors. In September, Ernestine was accepted at Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts. Immediately, like most college students, she began to look forward to the Thanksgiving break and home visits to her family and relatives, especially to her Uncle Thomas Smead Coolidge who lived two blocks away at 27 Bay Street on the Glens Falls road which leads directly north 11 miles to "Forty Acres" on Assembly Point.

Harold was not as fortunate as Ernestine. His mother could not afford college so he found a job in a Glens Falls furniture store. On becoming aware of this decision, T.S. Coolidge, by this time knowing Harold well, suggested he might prefer work as a teller, serving people in the Glens Falls National Bank, of which he was a Director. Harold readily accepted this opportunity.

In 1901, T.S. Coolidge was honored by being selected as one of 11 Directors of the newly formed International Paper Co., with its Adirondack office in South Glens Falls, a stone's throw south of the bridge over the Hudson River. He was also equipped with a desk in the company's New York office, which he visited at intervals for board meetings.

Harold had completed his two years as a teller. Then, searching for direction in his life and guided by Mr. Coolidge, he started his own career in real estate and insurance.

Legend has it that Ernestine, curious about her future, visited a fortune teller who "read" that fate demanded she be married before her 26th birthday! Of course, she told Harold. They studied their calendar and chose April 29, 1908, and well they did! It was the last Saturday open to her as she would be 26 on May 1, 1908! They decided the ceremony would be in the living room of Ernestine's lovely Ridge Street home in front of its large fireplace. The minister arrived on schedule; friends and family

crowded in, while a cheerful fire welcomed everybody. With his back to the fire, the minister proceeded with the familiar words while the bridal couple held hands. Turning to Harold he asked, "Do you take this woman to be your lawfully wedded wife?" to which Harold answered, "I do." Then, to Ernestine he asked the same. As he came to the key words, she stepped forward and looking over the minister's shoulder exclaimed, "Your robe is on fire!"

The guests stood aghast. Two alert maids ran forward with water. For years my mother took pleasure in keeping us wondering if she ever did say, "I do!"

We can assume that their honeymoon plans for Texas went smoothly. On arrival in this wide open country, they explored several places, hoping to find interesting employment and a satisfactory place to live. But what they found was disappointing. The vastness of Texas appalled them and after a month, they began to have second thoughts. It came to them that in their hometown, Glens Falls, with its orderly streets and beautiful trees, its proximity to Lake George and their large family and numerous friends, they would be happier and even more successful were they to return. Without further delay, they purchased return tickets to Glens Falls, happy to be heading home!

On arrival back, they were surprised and all but overwhelmed by a red-carpet welcome. Before they could catch their breath, their family and friends wanted to hear about their adventure. No one was more delighted to have them back than T.S. Coolidge, who, with a smile, returned Harold's keys to his Adamson & Bayle office. Soon, he and Harold were planning how they could begin to work in close association on local real estate matters in the Glens Falls area as well as at Assembly Point.

In the same year, 1908, a significant action that benefited Glens Falls, as well as Assembly Point, occurred: the decision by

the New York State Government based in Albany to recognize Glens Falls as a full-fledged city, the tenth in New York State. This allowed the city to have, among many other things, its own paid fire department, management, access to its own reservoirs, and its City Hall on Ridge Street.

The city was fast attracting top executives and other businessmen moving from New York City and Canada, who could enjoy walking to work unhampered by long subway rides and crowded city streets, as well as providing good schools for their children. The population in 1908 was approaching 9,000, and in the next 20 years doubled. Glens Falls became the second richest city per capita in the United States, possibly accounting for its being honored as "Hometown U.S.A.".

At the close of the first decade of the 20th century Harold received an unexpected but miraculously timely visit of an old boyhood friend, Ernest Meyer, whom he had known at Lake George during the period when he accompanied his father, Dr. Adamson, on his rounds.

Ernest had completed his college education in New York and had done advanced study in the field of surveying. He told Harold that though presently visiting his parents at their "Alma Farm" several miles west of Bolton, he would soon be en route to an assignment in the West. This would require a year or more after which he would return to the New York area to marry his fiancée, Alyce.

As a consequence of this additional news, Harold felt that T.S. Coolidge would be most interested and asked if he could introduce them. The three men sat down and spoke of their common interests in Lake George where all of them had been born. After a while, they touched on the possibility of attracting people to Assembly Point, where no shore lots on "Forty Acres" had been sold in 20 years. This seemed to interest Ernest and led to T.S.'s questions: "Why settle in New York City with your

wife? Why not think about coming to Glens Falls instead, where a good surveyor is needed? Did you know that the very building from which you and Harold have just come (Adamson & Bayle) could well serve your needs for a temporary home? Its upper floors are like a hotel with over 20 spacious rooms for single and married people."

Ernest showed more than a little interest and he and Alyce moved in.

## Chapter VI

### *The Glens Falls Leadership of Assembly Point*

When I was at Harvard Divinity School, Professor Cadbury gave a lecture in which he told the story of a luncheon guest remarking about his father's carefully landscaped property with which he concluded, "Isn't God wonderful!" To which his father added, "But you ought to have seen the land when God had it alone."

The lesson for us students was that God leaves some things to man as his agents.

With this in mind, let us look at the post-Sanford stage of land development on Assembly Point. We've seen the Point grow from several large farms and a sheep meadow to Dr. Sanford's skillful accomplishment in making Assembly Point a place to which New Yorkers could escape for a summer vacation in one of over a dozen lakeshore hotels.

Two important events took place, which soon would change the face of Assembly Point. The first was the coming of the automobile. Assembly Point had previously been the destination of people coming by train from New York City to spend their vacations in the beauty of the Adirondacks. Now, with the advent of the automobile, residents of Glens Falls (many of whom had recently moved from the bustle of New York City to this growing country town) were able to take the relatively short drive to Lake George and enjoy summer on the shores of the lovely lake.

The second event was the shift in T.S. Coolidge's attention and commitments from the Jointa Lime Co. and the International Paper Co. to preparing the Point for the automobile age. The legacy that Dr. Sanford gave Assembly Point was embedded in this leadership as the President of the Lake George Assembly. Sanford changed from a lone executive to a team player willing to subject himself to the executive leadership of his friend and highly experienced real estate developer, T.S. Coolidge.

On December 14, 1914, Jonathan Coolidge III died. It was a sad day for his many relatives and friends, and left the people who loved and respected him stunned. Jonathan had been born in Bolton, New York in 1834 where he lived with his parents, engaged in farming and lumbering. Shortly after the conclusion of the Civil War, he had moved to Glens Falls in 1866 where he joined his younger brother, Thomas Smead Coolidge and George Lee in the firm of Coolidge, Lee & Co. doing a wholesale/retail business in dry goods, groceries, and provisions. In 1879, the firm engaged in the manufacture of pulp at Ticonderoga. Jonathan built his own home in Crandall Park, where now the Crandall Library stands, adjacent and north of Harold Adamson's office building and six or seven doors from T.S. Coolidge's residence at 27 Bay Street. He married Hannah McEchran in 1870; they never had children.

According to H.P. Smith in *A History of Warren County* "never was a man more highly respected and active than Jonathan Coolidge."

Jonathan's death reduced the living directors of the Lake George Assembly to three — Dr. Sanford, President; Warren Smith (now of Ticonderoga), Vice President; and T.S. Coolidge, Treasurer, who was now freed from his lime and paper making and real estate ventures. These three directors agreed on the importance of certain corporation changes that had far-reaching

and positive implications not only for Assembly Point but also for the town of Glens Falls.

We now enter the era after the deaths of George Lee and Jonathan Coolidge III when T.S. Coolidge and Harold Adamson, with their keen respect for well thought out real estate development redesigned Forty Acres and brought Hometown U.S.A. with its fathers and mothers and children to their own summer homes – not hotels – on the shores of Lake George.

Following Jonathan's death, T.S. Coolidge, with the approval of Dr. Drurie Sanford, arranged to hold the annual meeting of directors and stockholders of the Lake George Assembly at Dove Cote Cottage. The meeting started promptly at 2:30 on September 2, 1913. T.S. was driven to the meeting by his nephew – my uncle – Irving Fowler, who subsequently was elected secretary of the revived Lake George Assembly. T.S. informed the stockholders that future meetings would be held at the Adamson & Bayle office at 3 Lapham Place, only a handshake away from City Hall and the hub of Glens Falls. T.S. reported that Harold Adamson had been approached and had agreed to act as agent for the sale of lots on Assembly Point, on which prospective buyers could build summer homes. Harold Adamson's real estate corporation was authorized to (1) prepare sensible deeds and (2) focus sales activity on residents of Glens Falls and the surrounding areas who could make the hour-long drive to the Point and thus have no problem in using their cottage for an entire summer season. The meeting also learned that Ernest Meyer, the highly qualified surveyor, had accepted the invitation to prepare the redesign of Forty Acres to open it to summer residents who could enjoy the beauty of Lake George from the vantage point of its long peninsula.

Before adjourning the meeting, T.S. Coolidge asked the new and present officers to continue keeping records and documents of all meetings. The annual meeting was then ad-

journed. It was followed immediately by a brief meeting of the three living Directors to discuss the selection of two additional Directors to replace those who had died. However, rules required that at least two weeks expire before any action was taken. At the end of the two weeks the required meeting in Glens Falls confirmed that Irving Fowler had been selected as the new Secretary and Harold Adamson as the fifth Director with special authority to sell lots appropriate to building dachas, or summer homes.

As an interesting aside, before leaving Assembly Point at the end of the summer of 1998, I received a letter from Barbara Meyer (daughter of surveyor Ernest Meyer) whom I knew as a young girl and whom I hadn't seen for over 50 years. In this letter she expressed her desire to reestablish acquaintance with the Adamson family. She mentioned that she was co-authoring a book about the Alma Farm, west of Bolton on Lake George, which my father, Harold Adamson, had analyzed in 1913 for possible sale. It turned out, however, that the owners of the farm decided not to sell.

Barbara also spoke of her father and how he had found Harold Adamson and T. S. Coolidge in agreement with him as far as redesigning the lots on Assembly Point. Their joint vision entailed eliminating the rustic summer houses and the shoreline paths. Where possible, the length of each lot would be 150 feet from the road to the lakeshore and 100 feet wide.

One of the interesting pieces of evidence for the planning done by Ernest Meyer was provided by Barbara Meyer from his 1914 "Date Book" which he kept as a kind of journal. Barbara edited about 90 of his numerous entries, which reveal, among other concerns, much of her father's work in preparing the needed map for the development of the lots on the Point. The entries show the respect Ernest Meyer held for his early Lake

George friend, Harold Adamson, as well as for his new employer, Mr. Coolidge.

The Date Book also includes comments by Ernest, as surveyor, about his intention to meet the mid-June deadline for additional workers to use his blueprints and start their own new work.

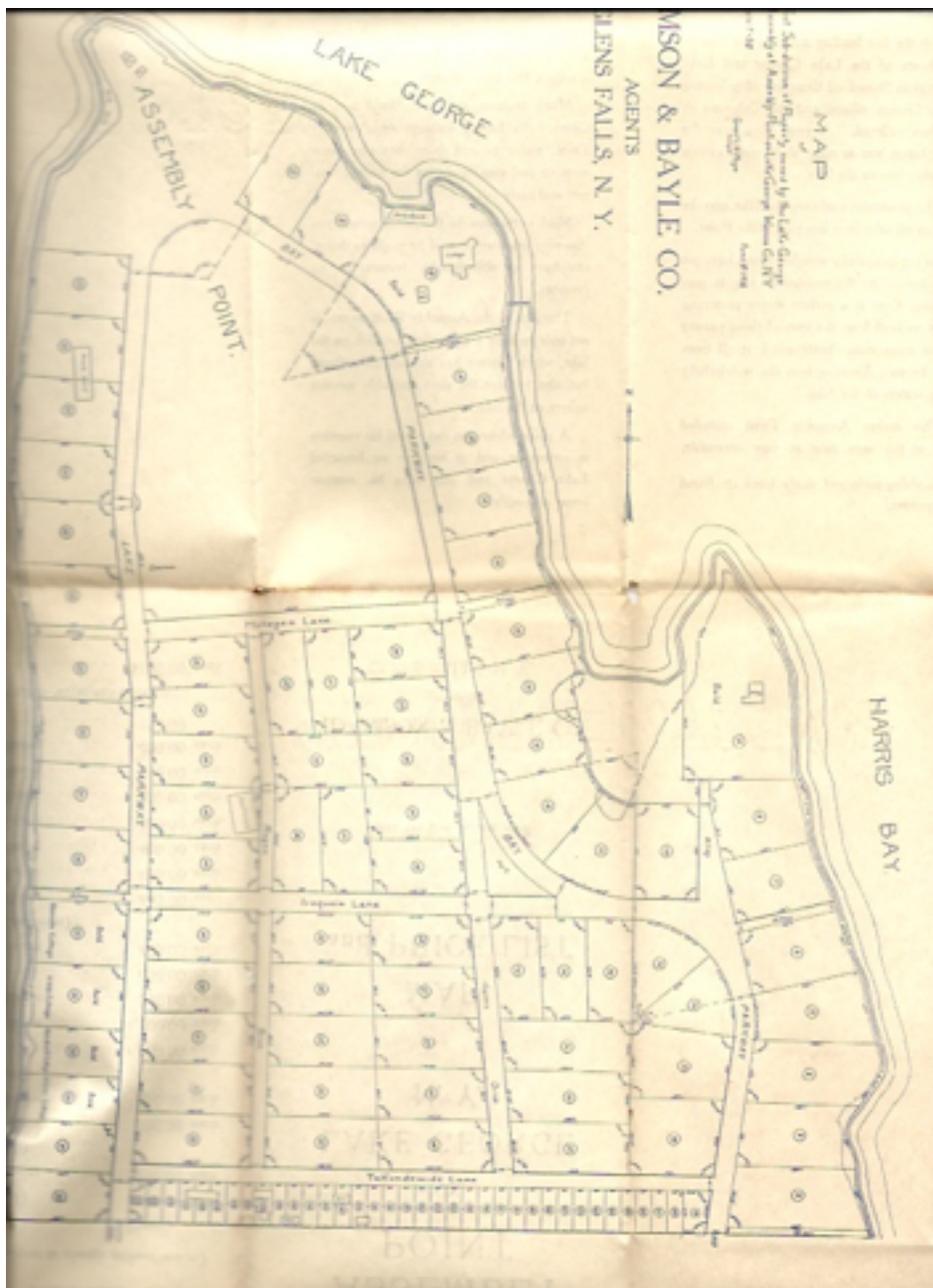
Within days, Ernest Meyer designed the famous Meyer map of 1914. Before looking at this map, the reader is invited to examine the photograph of "Charlotte," next page, showing where Sunrise and Sunset Promenades met at the north end of the Point (West, O'Keefe, Ross and Golde properties). The poster on the bulletin board announces that "Divine Services will be held in the Lectorium on Sunday, August 30." Similar posters were placed around the Lake and the steamer "Island Queen" made trips before and after the services for those desiring to attend. The picture was taken between 1895 and 1897. Services were not held after 1897. The little girl is carrying a stamped letter, which could indicate a walk to the post office, which was not located at the north end of the Point until 1895 when the new dock was built there.



*Where Sunrise and Sunset Promenades met at the north end of the Point. Circa 1895. (From an old Sanford negative.)*

Now imagine how you might change the Promenades in a way that would allow a more permanent road to be made. Then look at the Meyers Map and see how a skilled surveyor did the job.

Referring to the map, we can see challenges presented and how the three designers solved them.



1. The size of the lots to be deeded on the shorefront was to be where possible, 100' wide by 150' deep.
2. The paths in front of the lots were to be discontinued and a 16' wide road was constructed behind the lots.
3. Some 650' of shorefront property at the tip of the Point remained with the corporation: for public assembly, the community store, the Post Office and in time, a place for evening dancing to music played on a victrola.
4. The southern half of the roughly 17 interior acres encircled by a mile of dirt road (where the Lectorium had been) was designed for a number of lots for less expensive cottages. The northern half of the interior continued as property of the Lake George Assembly.
5. Five rights-of-way were provided for the use of cottagers buying interior lots for access to the lake.

The directors authorized Harold Adamson to prepare deeds for the sale of land for cottages that would include sensible concern for neighbors and visitors. Harold accepted the unpaid role of overseer for the Lake George Assembly property and responsibility for instructing a new caretaker who was soon selected.

Sales began at once. Before 1914 was over, the first lot (Lot # 1) was deeded to Howard Pearsall. By the summer of 1915, Harold Adamson's wife, Ernestine, had decided to invest some of her small inheritance to build the first cottage in Forty Acres on Lot 29, which he had carefully selected. Harold had often built model homes in Glens Falls, and Ernestine felt it would be a great way for potential buyers to envision what was possible.

Drurie Sanford also liked the idea, and recommended his son-in-law, Mr. Dubie, as highly qualified to do the job.

Harold quickly made contact with Mr. Dubie who could begin work early in June 1915. Accordingly, he studied the area and chose the spots on which the piers for the new house could stand. Then he invited Harold and Ernestine to drive from Glens Falls to check the locations he had selected. They accepted the invitation, approved the placement of the supports, and returned home. The following Sunday, they came back to the site and were delighted to find the cottage completed except for the kitchen, which was awaiting a stove. They were eager to move in and be able to show people their house as an example of what others could build on these unique lakeside sites.

Even though World War I should have slowed down sales' potential, the sales surprisingly went forward and by 1923 all the shore lots designated on the Meyers map, with minor exceptions, had been sold. The long-hoped for community had begun to emerge (see itemization of lots sold.)

Up until 1920, Harold represented Ernestine who had the largest share of stock in the corporation but, in those days before women's suffrage, as a "second class citizen," she had to be represented by a man. Drurie Sanford, still President of the Lake George Assembly, had for a long time been waiting to resign his two positions, one as President and the other as one of the five Directors of the corporation. The ratification of the 19th Amendment, which finally admitted that women were equal to men, inspired Dr. Sanford to write a letter stating he would resign both positions and nominated T.S. Coolidge as his replacement for President. As Director, he named Ernestine F. Adamson. The following letter still exists showing his decision, stated so eloquently.

Sanford's colleagues applauded his decision and hastened to put into effect the nominations. Ernestine accepted and real-

ized with a smile of delight that the new law would enable her to take on challenges equal to those the men had to meet. She thanked her old friend and accepted the nomination forthwith.

T.S. Coolidge also accepted the honor, long in coming and long overdue. For the few months he was yet to live, he met the challenges facing him with remarkable understanding and success. Then on September 24, 1921, he died at the age of 83.

The comments in his *Post Star* obituary attest to Mr. Coolidge's quiet, helpful life. He was considered to be "one of the foremost in bringing about the development of Glens Falls from a small village to a prosperous city," one of the wealthiest in the United States. Behind his success was a desire to join with other Coolidge relatives in building the growing community life of Assembly Point — an area, which he and his older brothers, George Lee and Jonathan, had participated in buying in the 1880's.

My mother by this time was enjoying her summers except for the stream of people walking on the paths across her front yard. She anticipated with dread a future day when people would be coming down the alley next to her house to swim in the Lake. The privilege of access was beginning to be abused and she encouraged Harold not to sell the center lots. By this time, other cottage owners were beginning to feel a need for privacy and began to put up fences on the original old Sanford promenades along the lake shore to block the flow of traffic. Mr. Cullough, one of the residents (on the former Knox property), however, still wanted access by the shore path to walk the beautiful promenade to the store. A big fight ensued that summer of 1923 prompting the Stanton Lawsuit. The statute he had to contend with stated that if the public uses something for 20 years, the right to trespass was grandfathered. It was unclear whether the paths had been used for 20 years. Harold, representing the

corporation, handled the situation with his natural diplomacy and the promenades were shut down.

The following pages show:

- 1) Minutes of the special meeting of the Board of Directors on January 22, 1921
- 2) Dr. Sanford's resignation letter nominating Thomas Coolidge as President and Ernestine Adamson as Director
- 3) Brochure promoting Assembly Point put out by Adamson & Bayle
- 4) Deeds of lots sold on Assembly Point from 1914-1925
- 5) Price List

MINUTES OF A DULY CALLED SPECIAL MEETING OF THE  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE LAKE GEORGE ASSEMBLY  
held in the office of Adamson & Bayle Company,  
73 Lapham Place, Glens Falls, N. Y. at 11 A. M.  
Saturday, January 22nd, 1921

Present:- D. S. Sanford, T. S. Coolidge, J. I. Fowler,  
W. H. Adamson being four fifths of the Directors of the  
Company.

Meeting called to order by President.

On motion of T. S. Coolidge seconded by W. H. Adamson  
it was resolved that the resignation of Drurie S. Sanford  
President of the Company, be, and hereby is accepted as  
per his written request received this day. T. S. Coolidge  
and hereby is elected President of the Company to fill  
the vacancy caused by the resignation of D. S. Sanford.  
Motion carried.

On motion of D. S. Sanford, duly seconded by W. H.  
Adamson, it was resolved that W. H. Adamson be, and hereby  
is elected Treasurer of the Corporation to fill the vacancy  
caused by the resignation of T. S. Coolidge, and accepted  
this day. It is understood and agreed that the Treasurer be,  
and hereby is authorized to employ the services of an  
Assistant to such an extent as he may find necessary, all  
at the expense of the Corporation. Motion carried.

On motion of T. S. Coolidge, seconded by J. I. Fowler,  
the resignation of Drurie S. Sanford as Director of this  
Corporation be, and hereby is accepted, in accordance with  
his written request received this day, and it is further  
resolved that Ernestine F. Adamson, a stockholder of said  
Corporation, be, and hereby is duly elected a Director to  
fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of said D. S.  
Sanford. Motion carried.

On motion meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted.

Ernie ~~J. I.~~ ~~Sanford~~ Fowler  
Secretary

*Thomas S. Collidge*

January 20th, 1921

January 22nd, 1921

To the Secretary of  
The Lake George Assembly.

My dear Sir:-

Kindly say to the Board of Directors, as it is becoming more and more necessary that the President of the Company should be locally resident, and it is well that Directors should be also, so after over thirty years in said positions, my resignation from both is herewith before them for prompt acceptance and no further re-election in either capacity.

My long spun out service has been a pleasure, may the containing pleasures be yours, and it is my further pleasure to nominate Mr. Thomas S. Collidge as my logical successor, as President, Ernestine Adamson as the logical successor to my Directorship.

Very appreciatively,

Yours very truly,

*D. S. Sanford*

## Assembly Point on Lake George

---

Assembly Point is a part of the east shore of Lake George and about four miles from Lake George village.

It is the first landing made by the passenger boats of the Lake George and Lake Champlain Steamboat Company after leaving Lake George village and the Delaware & Hudson railroad. A post office near the dock brings you as many daily mails as you get anywhere on the lake.

The mountains enclosing the lake may be seen on all sides from any part of the Point.

As the beautifully wooded shores have not been injured by the woodman's axe, in generations, there is a perfect screen protecting those on land from the eyes of those passing in the many motor boats which at all times may be seen skimming over the wonderfully clear waters of the lake.

This makes Assembly Point secluded and at the same time so very accessible.

Rambling paths and shady lanes are found everywhere.

Sandy beaches for the children to play on are there also.

Fish are abundant in the immediate vicinity.

Good country roads for automobiles connect Assembly Point with the surrounding country and the State macadam road, known as the New York City-Montreal Trunk Line, is only a few miles distant.

Many business and professional men of Glens Falls having cottages on Assembly Point, motor to and from that city every morning and evening during the spring, summer and early fall.

Mild restrictions in the deeds insure you that your neighbor, even if he might so desire, can have no objectionable features on his premises.

The idea of the Assembly Point owners is not only to have a most ideal location on the lake, which Nature has already given them, but also to have the most desirable summer colony on the lake.

A place where one can spend his vacation in retirement and at his ease on beautiful Lake George and also have his summer home accessible.

Deeds of sale: 31 from *Reviews Research*, Lots Sold 1914-  
~~to 1922~~ by Adams & ~~Co~~ <sup>16</sup>

27 ~~31~~ Lots deeded by the Lake George Assembly Inc.  
 and sold by Adams and ~~Dayle~~ Co

Date	Lot No.	Name purchaser	
Dec. 1 1914	21	Caroline T. Hanson	16
Dec. 15 1914	1	Howard C. Pearsall	17
Sept. 24 1915	36	Archib. McEachron	GF
May 5 1916	Strip land 15' wide east of Lot #22	Caroline T. Hanson	East Over
June 28 1915	35	Samuel D. Kendrick	GF
May 18 1917	29	Ernestine F. Adamson	GF
May 31 1918	23	Marion W. Archibald	NY
Aug. 14 1918	37. <del>Number</del>	George A. McNeal	GF
July 2 1915	33	David & Martha H. Copeland	GF
Aug. 20 1919	18&19	Ida Ewing Peters	
Aug. 20 1919	16&17	Samuel A. Demerest	GF
July 19 1920	32	Michael & Lawrence F. Barsaloux	
July 19 1920	{ no. 2 of lot 38 }	Lester Lockhart	GF
July 19 1920	{ no. 1 of lot 38 }	George A. McNeal	GF
Sept. 27 1920	25 (15)	Charles W. & Cordia M. Hughes	
Oct. 25 1920	34	Sanford Sales Corp.	
Oct. 25 1920	North 75' lot 23	Jennie M. Coyle	GF
Dec. 16 1920	and strip land adj. lot 23	Caroline T. Hanson	
Feb. 9 1922	4	Ethel M. Goodman	GF
Feb. 9 1922	26	Gussie Mayer	GF?
Feb. 11 1922	15	Mary Goodman Carson	GF
June 6 1922	14	Mary Goodman Carson	GF
Oct. 11 1923	5	Stephen A. Hays	GF
Oct. 11 1923	7	Frank K. & Helen S. Smalley	GF
Oct. 11 1923	8	Minnie C. Knight	
July 30 1924	6	Wilhemina W. Hays	
Apr. 28 1920	20	Mary A. & Kenneth D. Sanford	
Rec. Jan. 1925			
Feb. 7 1925	27, 28, 30 & 31	Ernestine F. Adamson	GF
	over 27 sold!		Book 163, P. 11

## PRICE LIST

(Prices subject to change without notice.)

Nos.	PRICES
1 (sold)	
2-8 inclusive . . . . .	\$750.00 each
9 (sold)	
10-13 inclusive . . . . .	500.00 each
14-19 inclusive . . . . .	750.00 each
20 (sold)	
21-22 . . . . .	1,000.00 each
23-28 inclusive . . . . .	1,000.00 each
29-32 inclusive . . . . .	750.00 each
37-38 . . . . .	600.00 each
39-44 inclusive . . . . .	400.00 each
45 (Electorium)	
46-48 inclusive . . . . .	400.00 each
49-51 inclusive . . . . .	400.00 each
52-56 inclusive . . . . .	400.00 each
57-66 inclusive . . . . .	300.00 each
67-69 inclusive . . . . .	400.00 each
70-71 inclusive . . . . .	300.00 each
72-78 inclusive . . . . .	400.00 each
79 . . . . .	250.00
REAR LOTS WITH NO BUILDINGS	
25 feet . . . . .	\$100.00 each

# ASSEMBLY POINT

ON

LAKE GEORGE  
N. Y.

MAP  
and PRICE LIST

Lots marked X are sold

ADAMSON & BAYLE CO.

AGENTS  
GLENS FALLS, N. Y.

## Chapter VII

### *Lake George Assembly to Otyokwa*

This chapter concerns the transition of 1,000 shares of stock from four families to two families and from these two families to the two dozen or so owners of shore front property on Assembly Point (Lots 2-37 on Meyers map). It is also the story of defeat in preventing a paved road encircling 17 acres of today's Otyokwa property.

Sales had proceeded steadily throughout the 1920's, and by the end of the decade all lakeshore lots had been sold. It had been a decade of idyllic summers where residents enjoyed the pleasures of the Lake in a relaxed and friendly community.

From my brother Charles' piece on Otyokwa:

*The period of relaxing summer vacations unfortunately could not survive the effects of the 1929 stock market crash and the subsequent disastrous depression. As the 1930's decade advanced, cottages were left vacant or sold and the number of boats on the lake dropped noticeably. The Point just wasn't what it not-long-ago had been....*

By 1930, the only salable lots remaining were the 40 "campsites" in the center of the Assembly property and the 36 small lots along Crossover Lane. With the Depression worsening there was no interest in these interior lots.

In 1933, my father died suddenly of a heart attack. I was devastated, as was my whole family, but our love of Assembly Point was unshakable; in fact, it was enhanced by the memory of his love of summers spent there with his wife and children, and enjoying the outboard motors and racing boats that were his passion, which I inherited.

The Lake George Assembly assets remaining at the death of Harold Adamson on February 21, 1933 – three weeks after Hitler became chancellor of Germany, 11 days before FDR was inaugurated – were 1,000 shares of stock controlling the following assets: a mile of dirt road surrounding the unsold 17 acres; five alleys or accesses to the Lake of about 16 feet each; 500 feet of shorefront at the very tip of the Point, from which extended a 200-foot steamboat pier to a ramp in the channel between South Island and the Point. On this property were a small post office and a country store, which would burn of unknown causes within three years. In addition to this, there was the caretaker's farmhouse and a barn on the old crossroads, which is now Crossover Lane.

With little chance of future sales, it was decided that the Lake George Assembly would liquidate its remaining assets. In order to deal equitably with the stockholders and complete the task of the Lake George Assembly to liquidate its property, I was encouraged to take the responsibility by Coolidge Sherman, future father-in-law of my sister Emily. He suggested I start buying stock wherever I could from members of the families who owned it. All the original founders were dead. Coolidge himself had inherited about 250 shares, which he said he would sell to me for \$4.50 a share. I was to pay him \$10 on the first of every month while I was in college and if I failed to pay him the \$10 he, as a teacher, would require me to forfeit all my equity. Needless to say, I was very worried and tried to raise \$10 every month, but by the time I had finished college and bought other

shares of stock from other members of the founding fathers' families, I owed the bank \$2,500.

My mother and sisters and brother were supportive of this effort. Emily's encouragement came in the form of a joint effort to think about what we would like for our families in the future.

In 1936, my father's sister, Ethelwyn, who lived in Vancouver wanted Emily and me to come visit her and said she would partially subsidize the trip. So, Emily and I decided to go West but needed more money. At this time, my mother had about five houses which, because of the Depression she couldn't sell, but she could rent them. We made a deal with my mother to paint one of her houses for \$250 instead of the \$350 the contractor wanted. I got out of college in June, and Emily and I began to paint 10-12 hours a day. We finished by the 4th of July and went to Cambridge, Massachusetts to collect the pay from my mother who was living there and also to collect the funds that our Aunt Ethelwyn had deposited in the Harvard bank.

It was the beginning of a great adventure as we started for our first destination in Wyoming. We made the first 2,000 miles and met one of my Andover classmates, Frank Bosler, at noon on a Friday in time to go to the rodeo in Cheyenne. After the rodeo, Frank drove us to his mother's ranch outside Cheyenne. We were cordially welcomed by Mrs. Bosler and then saw their fabulous ranch house on one of the more modest Wyoming ranches that took 180 miles to drive around. Emily fell in love with the ranch house. That's when she suggested buying the property on the tip of Assembly Point if I could get it with my share of the stock and building a ranch house like the Bosler's on it. Although we eventually had to give up the idea of building the log cabin ourselves, we had shown the eventual owners a photograph of the Bosler house. The log cabin, formerly owned by the Stewarts (now West's property), is a fairly close replica of what Emily and I had in mind.

In order to have the Point with the ranch house on it and horses, it became imperative, Emily and I thought, for the road to go down the middle. We worked towards this end in cooperation with the other owners of the land from the isthmus north. After the steamboats stopped delivering mail and the post office burned down, it was necessary for a road to be open for mail delivery. We were required to deed to the Town of Queensbury the mile-long looped dirt road with the tacit understanding that if we ever did put the road down the middle and the Town were to pave it, they would return the loop road to property owners.

We still held the five alleys or rights-of-way to the Lake for people building on the back property, but since my mother and I controlled the corporation with her stock and the stock I'd already purchased, it was a fixed conclusion that we would not sell any of that property for residential building or camping use. We did decide, however, to sell it to any shore resident who would buy back to the center and attach this land to his shore front deed. The first obstacle we met in suggesting this to the 20-odd owners of the shore front property was how would they be certain we didn't end up building houses back there and using the five alleys? We decided this was a valid concern so we approached the property owners on either side of the alleys and either split them or sold them. Once we had done this, we approached the owners again, offering them the land in back for \$200 a lot. Thinking this was a sensible and fair arrangement, we ourselves began to build a tennis court in back of my mother's property.

Hitler's aggression loomed ominously, and I believe this influenced everybody's belief in the future with fear pervading. Much as we tried in the summers of 1937 and 1938 to sell the interior property, only one of the property owners showed any interest in purchasing land for himself (thereby also increasing his taxes). The property owners knew they had us over a barrel. Things got very bad, but we were not totally discouraged be-

cause we still felt the Town of Queensbury would help out by agreeing to extend the road they had already started down Burnt Ridge. It presently went as far as the isthmus, and we thought they would extend it through the Knox and Harris farmland, down the center of the Lake George Assembly to the Point. This would be an incentive for the landowners to buy in the back and enjoy an extension of their property. Certainly it would prevent the dirt road from being paved and encouraging cars to speed by so close to their houses.

It was a great disappointment, then, that after a year of believing that the residents of the three sections of the Point wanted the road to go in back of their houses instead of separating them from the Lake, we found out they did not care where the road went. A meeting in Rockhurst, at which maybe 80 people attended, surprised everyone by finding the residents following thoughtless leadership by voting to pave the shore front road (Assembly Point Road) in the mile strip from the isthmus to Frommels rather than putting the road back 200 feet from the Lake through the farmland. This unexpected decision negated the possibility of a central road through the 17 acres of the Lake George Assembly property; the loop road would remain and eventually be paved.

Still the Lake George Assembly property owners refused — for their own interest — to buy property in the back at \$200 each. After Hitler's invasion of Poland in 1939 it became a certainty that none of the property owners, except Dr. Lucas, was to count enough on the future to invest even \$200 in adding real estate to their property, ending the possibility of my getting \$2,500 towards helping to pay off my loan.

At this juncture, a very fine new resident of the Point, Dr. Gilbert Pasquera, highly placed in the hierarchy of Mt. McGregor Hospital, showed an awareness of the art of real estate and leadership. He developed a plan, which he then presented to several other men on the Point, unsuspected by me. Instead of

\$200, each would pay \$115 and form a corporation very similar to the Lake George Assembly. It stipulated that each of the 30-odd shares would never go with the sale of individual shore property, but would be in the name of the resident of that property until he sold. The property owners were encouraged, and the \$3,000 for the sale of shares in this company was enough to buy the land from the Lake George Assembly and for me to receive a large part of the \$2,500 I needed to repay the bank.

This new corporation was named "Otyokwa." The name was submitted by my mother who loved words. With her great sense of community, she loved the idea of a place for people to congregate, and she discovered a special term, "Otyokwa", which was derived from the Mohawk, meaning "a place of assembly" or "gathering of friendly people." Otyokwa was organized in the summer of 1939 as a membership corporation, which had as its members property owners on Assembly Point who owned the 36 parcels of property located around the lands of Otyokwa (see Charles Adamson's history of Otyokwa at [www.assemblypt.com](http://www.assemblypt.com)).

With the decision made against a road down the center of the Point and with the 17 acres inside the loop to become the community center, possibly used for recreation or just kept forever wild, and the alleys sold, there was only one major asset that had to be dealt with. This was the very tip of the Point itself where the Post Office had been. The main problem was the price, and one executive of the insurance company, Mr. Buddy, offered us \$5,000. But there was another problem. For years, Dr. Sanford and Dr. Sanford's son-in-law, Mr. Dubie, had been using the Point for a parking place and a point of access by boat to the island. This was a serious problem. If the property was sold, how was he going to get to the island? Mr. Dubie threatened a lawsuit because he felt he had to have a right of way.

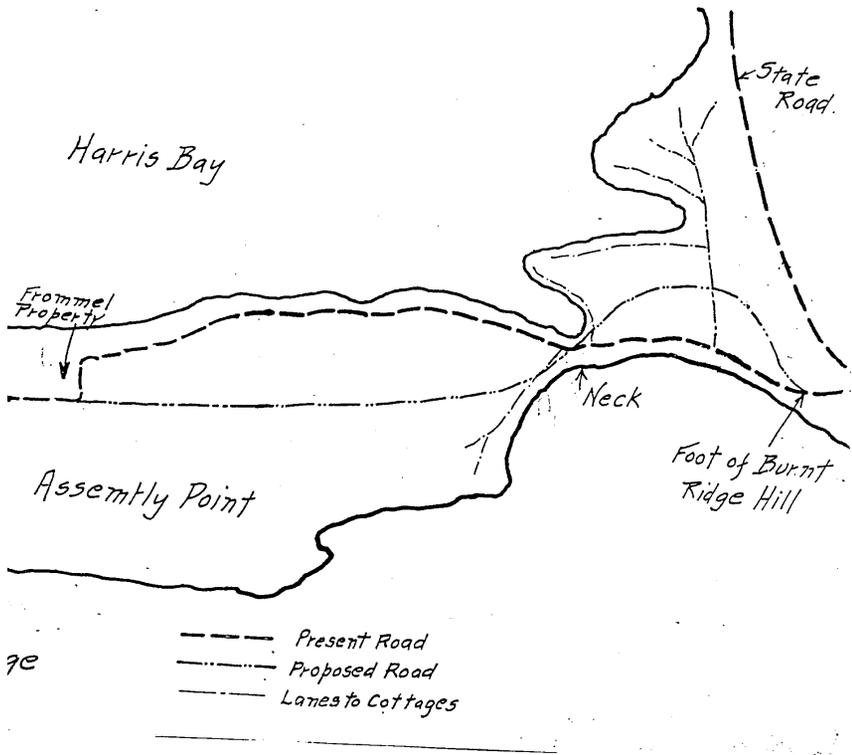
With Dr. Pasquera's help as a member of the Board of Directors, we devised a satisfactory plan and offered Dubie a right

of way of 25 feet in the back and 75 feet in the front with a clause in the agreement stating that if the island were ever sold and went out of the Sanford family, this right of way agreement would **not** be attached to the sale of the island. This was very wise and foresighted because if, for instance, the island had gone as was threatened to General Electric where they would make summer homes for their management staff, they could have used the parking space. The traffic would have been horrendous!

So having dealt with the potential threat of the parking place at the end of the Point and the agreement that the right of way would not run with the island should it be sold, we approached Mr. Buddy again to buy the property. By this time, he had lost interest. Whereupon, we divided it into two areas and took a lot with 100 feet north of the Lester/Golde property (now owned by the Ross/Rudd family) and then offered the remaining part to two very interested persons Mr. Pert and Mr. Yaffee. They agreed to buy the dock, the assets and the Point (except for the 100 feet, which was a reserved lot) for \$7,500 and we completed the sale of the land.

The following pages show:

- 1) Map of the northern part of Assembly Point showing the present road and the proposed road
- 2) Proposal to the Town of Queensbury for relocating the road on Assembly Point



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PROPOSAL TO THE SUPERVISOR AND MEMBERS OF THE TOWN BOARD  
OF THE TOWN OF QUEENSBURY, WARREN COUNTY, NEW YORK  
FOR RELOCATING THE ROAD ON ASSEMBLY POINT, LAKE GEORGE, N. Y.

- - - - -

It is proposed that the present road leading to the northern extremity of Assembly Point be re-routed between the foot of Burnt Hill and the westerly end of the east to west roadway by the Frommel property as indicated on the attached map.

From the foot of Burnt Hill near the Kirkpatrick property the proposed road to bear northeasterly over the property of Gleason and Brayton back of the camps of Gleason, Moore, Wiley, Herald, Baxter, Donaldson, Ferriss, Tice and Dickinson to the place known as the neck, thence in a northerly direction through the Knox, Nevins and Jackson property, joining the present highway at the rear of the Frommel property.

The new highway to be hard surfaced, of sufficient width for cars to pass without difficulty. The roadway to be properly ditched and drained. The connecting roadway north of the Frommel junction is to be improved and drained so as to be hard surfaced and useable throughout the entire year.

At the September (1938) meeting of the Assembly Point Association held at the Hotel Willard, assurance was given by two members of the Town Board present that this new road would not increase taxes.

This proposal has had the consideration of those property owners on Assembly Point whose names are signed on the sheet attached hereto, and by the position of their signatures they have indicated their attitude with respect thereto.

## Chapter VIII

### *A Glimpse into Community: Life on Assembly Point in the 1920's*

When I was a child, in those endless, idyllic summers, the *Horicon* docked every day at 10:30. The two Cross boys, who camped on South Island, would swim across the channel and help Mr. Ellsworth, the caretaker (who also ran the Post Office and store), catch the ropes and bring the boat to dock. People disembarked from the big boats, carrying picnics and tennis rackets, eager to spend the day on this beautiful piece of land.



*One of the boats (either the Sagamore or the Horicon) approaching the Big Dock. c. 1912. George Fielding. Courtesy of the Chapman Museum.*

All summer long residents would gather at the Post Office and general store to exchange pleasantries and share stories of their families. I'd like to interject a few personal stories here that show what life was like at that time on Assembly Point. It was a wonderful time and a beautiful place to spend my childhood summers.

### *Netty the Goat*

One summer, Dr. Hunt said, "Bob looks pretty anemic. What's he drinking for milk?" My father said I was just getting regular milk. "That's it." said Dr. Hunt. "No more of that. He's got to have goat's milk." My father said, "Where do we get goat's milk?" "Buy a goat," said Dr. Hunt. My father said he didn't know how to milk a goat, but Dr. Hunt told him he darn well better learn. So we got Netty. My father put up two acres of wire on the vacant land behind the cottage to house her. Every summer we'd load up Netty in the car and bring her to Assembly Point. At the end of the summer, we'd take her home again where she lived in our back yard.

### *Dr. Sanford and the Ice Cream Cones*

The Monday morning after we had arrived for the summer, Dad, as did many of the summer fathers, had to leave at eight for his hour ride to Glens Falls and a new week of work. Libby, our maid, had breakfast ready at seven. After breakfast Dad milked Nettie, kissed everyone good-bye and reminded Emily and me to take the goats across the road to a flat, two-acre grazing area he'd fenced in for their playground.

An hour or so later, there was a gentle knock on the door. Emily and I both ran. It was Dr. Sanford, owner of the longest island in Lake George, and one of the most delightful, elderly grandfathers we ever knew.



*Dock, Post Office and Store*

This morning he came to pay his first visit of the year to my mother and to take Emily and me to the small general store at the Point to arrange for our summer's ice cream cones. For some reason, he seemed to like both of us, and every year for as long we could remember, had given us an early present – 100 healthy ice cream cones (each only cost a nickel in 1923).

After meeting baby Charles and a short visit with my mother, he asked Emily and me to go back to the store where he had parked his motorboat. We jumped, ready to go, knowing what he meant. "Yes!" said Emily, "Just wait till I take these awful shoes off."

Dr. Sanford took each of us by the hand and led us down the unpaved road, past the four cottages that separated Lot 29 from the community land called The Point, to the store where mothers came daily to buy supplies and visit with their friends.

At the store, Mr. Ellsworth greeted us and then, with great respect, turned to Dr. Sanford who asked rhetorically, "Mr. Ellsworth, may we make the same arrangements as last year? Here is the \$5 advance for Bob, and the \$5 advance for Emily." Two brand new \$5 bills appeared, which he put in our hands.

"Ice cream is very good for them, my studies show, but not too much at a time. You may take their money now. They know the agreement. No more than two a day, one in the morning and one in the afternoon — most likely when the big steamboats stop and everyone comes for the mail. But if they miss any morning or afternoon, fine. They just won't compound the usage and have three the next day."

Just as we all shook hands, a youngish man and wife, Elsie, new to the Point entered the store. They were Mr. and Mrs. Robert Ervien and said good morning to the men; then turning to Emily and me said, "You must be Bob and Emily. We know your father well. Last winter he sold us a lovely lot — about ten places south of your cottage, and like you, we've come for the summer. Our summer home is 'Trails End.' We just met your older sister, Nesta, and her equally pretty friend, Jean Stanton. They told us you had come to the store with Dr. Sanford for your yearly lesson in business. Here they are now. Hello girls."

"Hello, again. Mr. Ervien. Hi, Mrs. Ervien," Nesta and Jean said in unison. At that moment, Mr. Ervien looked at Emily's feet. "Why, Emily, you don't have on any shoes! You're barefooted. You walked down the dirt road with Dr. Sanford without shoes!"

"I have to," Emily answered. "Robinson Crusoe did. You have to when you live on an island!"

"See what I have to put up with Mr. Ervien?" said Nesta. "Emily knows this is not an island. Jean and I told her last year! We rowed our boat all the way to the isthmus, and had to stop. There is no canal through it. We live on a peninsula, Emily! So your Robinson Crusoe would wear shoes!"

"I understand what you are saying, Nesta," said Mr. Ervien, "but I think there is a case for it being an island. I want to think about it a few days."

## *Tricky Paddling Around the Point*

A day or so after we had first met Mr. and Mrs. Ervien at the Point's small general store, Emily and I, with Mother's permission, set back out for one of the two ice cream cones Dr. Sanford had allowed us each day. "We'll bring back the Post-Star and the mail, Mother" we shouted, and hardly had we reached the road but we ran into the Erviens.

"Hi, Bob and, Emily. You're just I ones we've been looking for. Elsie and I have thought much about the idea of all of us paddling around the Point. How about we take you both in our new Sponson canoe down Harris Bay, past the old Harris farm where the piano-tuner, Mr. Jackson, now lives, get a glimpse of the YMCA camp with the boys playing baseball, and traverse the neck at the canal? Elsie and I will stop at your dock about nine tomorrow, which will give you time enough to take the goats to their meadow and for Bobby to pump his hundred strokes for that man-sized water tank on your cottage roof."

At the stroke of nine the next morning the Ervien's untipable canoe with the life savers built into the sides drew up to our dock. We paddled north 1000 feet to the Big Dock, then ducked under the bridge that lead out to the steamboat landing area and headed due south to Assembly Point's very narrow isthmus (Crew's property).

At the narrowest spot, Emily stood up in the boat and could see over the road; hardly 15 feet in front of her was the main body of Lake George, gently splashing on the western shore — but there was absolutely no sign of a canal nor a tunnel entrance! If there was one, it was now blocked by stone and dirt as support for the road.

"Don't despair, Emily," comforted Mr. Ervien. I'm going to pull abreast of the land where the canal ought to be. Bob and Elsie will get out and pull the bow rope. I'll get out and push. Emily, you use Mrs. Ervien's paddle."

Saying this, he pulled parallel to the land, and all but Emily got out. He leaned into the stern and brought out two cedar rollers, the length of a cane, but slightly thicker. Mrs. Ervien removed the bow rope and climbed up the low bank to the dirt road and pulled. Emily pushed her paddle across the roadway, and soon we had to hold it as the canoe slid down the west bank and into the lapping water of the main Lake with Mr. Ervien holding it by the stern rope.

A mile later, headed back north, we approached Lot 29. Here everyone waited, expecting failure, with our return from the Big Dock. "It's an island! It's an island! I paddled around it!" yelled Emily.

After this, Dad changed his mind about the safety of Old Town Canoes and bought a green Sponson for my sister, Nesta. Emily and I helped him build a canoe slide for it (and our own twelve-foot rowboat) on one of four new Lake Shore lots Mother had now added to her original Lot 29, as if foreseeing a future "Kennedy Compound" of contiguous, but independent, summer homes for her children and grandchildren.

I must say I was never able, in telling this story to my own children years later, to make it fully believable that Assembly Point had once been an island. But an Abenaki old timer I know told me, yes, Assembly Point was an island indeed, though more southerly, it was fully cut off from Queensbury in the Dunham's Bay marshes.

### *Who Piled the Wood?*

A few days after Dad had partnered with Dr. Stanton to buy two Sponson canoes like the Ervien's, he surprised us.

He had discovered a local carpenter willing to raise the sides of the outdoor tent we were allowed to use for our summer bedroom. The carpenter built a solid wood framework three feet high to which he attached the large canvass tent. The

work took no more than a day or two, but for many summers to come, the higher tent was a blessing, especially since it provided extra space, now that Charles the baby needed an indoor bedroom.

The pile of scrap wood from the carpentry resulted in a large amount of firewood lying around the tent area that needed stacking before it could be used in an outside fireplace. Consequently, Dad cut the lumber into smaller, more appropriate, firewood sizes. Then, tired, he asked Emily and me to pick up the remaining wood and stack it.

We said "willingly," and he went to take a nap.

As we watched him climb the stairs, two of our friends from the east side of the Point stopped to invite us for a sunny morning swim. We eagerly followed them in our bathing suits and were gone for an hour. On returning to the woodpile, we were amazed to find it already stacked. Looking in the cottage window, we saw Dad coming down the stairs. We moved back to the fireplace and waited for him to join us. He looked around at the pile of wood and said, "I wonder who stacked the wood so neatly. "

Not wanting Emily to beat me, and knowing Dad had been upstairs, I quickly said, "I did."

"That's funny," Dad countered, "because I did."

Emily stood with her mouth open, and I couldn't have been more humiliated, caught in such a foolish lie. I have never forgotten the experience, especially how my father silently returned upstairs. I do not believe I ever lied again.

### *The Death of President Harding*

President Harding died unexpectedly on his way from Alaska to California by train on Friday, August 2, 1923. As with many presidents, he was revered by the American public. It was only later that word came out about the faithlessness of some of

his appointees, and changed the people's estimate of his administration. At the time of his death, communities all over the United States met to pay him honor. Harold invited Drurie Sanford to lead the memorial service at Assembly Point.

For us children it became an opportunity to help and participate. Since the service would be at noon on Saturday at the Point, Emily and I, along with others hurried to meet the truck bringing about 100 chairs from Glens Falls for the expected guests. We spent time arranging the chairs, reserving four spaces for ourselves and Mr. and Mrs. Ervien. Harold and Ernestine were seated with the Lake George Assembly directors.

There were more guests than anticipated, but none minded standing as they were absorbed in Drurie Sanford's impressive comments about the importance of the American presidency and in particular the loss of President Harding.

In addition to his comments about President Harding, Drurie Sanford spoke about the new President, Calvin Coolidge from Vermont, mentioning that one of his relatives had fought in the American Revolution alongside Coolidge's brother who later settled at Coolidge Hill in Bolton across from Assembly Point.

Mr. Ervien whispered to Emily, "You never told me your mother was related to our new President, Calvin Coolidge. After this service, he will be talking from Washington at about one o'clock. Won't you and Bob come to 'Trail's End' to listen to him?"

Emily responded, "How could we hear him? Bob says Washington is much farther from Assembly Point than Glens Falls."

"You won't have any trouble hearing him," said Mrs. Ervien, "but you won't be able to see him."

The Ermines had recently bought a brand new radio, an attraction we had heard of but never seen. This would be our first experience of the new invention.

## *Grandma Comes to the Point*

Every summer we looked forward to a visit from our grandmother, Emily Jackson Adamson, whom we adored. Grandma didn't like the bumpy dirt road from Glens Falls, so instead she took the trolley ten miles to Lake George Village and from there boarded one of the steamboats that carried the mail, passengers and supplies of food to several points along its 32 mile trip from the Village to Ticonderoga. Six miles later she'd descend a gangplank and be hugged by two excited grandchildren.

Earlier that morning we watched excitedly from our dock as her ship departed the Village. When it reached Diamond Island, we were permitted to start for the Big Dock five cottages away, and joined others to watch the Sagamore land. Off the tip of the Point a long bridge led to a ballroom-size deck on the landing pier. Just south of the bridge was a half-moon of sandy beach where children could wade in shallow water while their



*Lake George, N.Y. the steamer Sagamore. 1880*  
*The Sagamore approaching Assembly Point.*

parents gossiped and waited for the mail boat. The Big Dock was a miracle of construction, jutting 200 feet into the channel and strong enough to accommodate the large steamboat.

As Emily and I arrived, many of our friends had begun walking across the bridge to the platform in order to watch more closely the Sagamore's skill in landing. Others were making non-binding bets on whether Mr. Ellsworth would catch or miss the landing ropes on the first throw. Today he was successful, caught them, and lassoed the dock posts, securing the ship as the crowd clapped and cheered.

With the Sagamore roped fast, its railing opened and two agile crew members jumped to the dock dragging a wide gangplank on which other crew members descended carrying supplies for the store. Finally the way was cleared for passengers and among the first was our beaming grandmother waving to us as she disembarked. We each held a hand, stopping at the store to get our ice cream cones, and chattered all the way home to our cottage.

### *No Foolin'*

Because of my father, outboard motor boats – and especially racing boats – were in my blood. One day, when I was around 11, I took the train by myself to New York City to the Motor Boat Show. I was supposed to go with my father but something came up at the last minute; he couldn't go that day but would join me later and after much deliberation allowed me to go ahead on the train by myself.

The old exhibition hall, Grand Central Palace, was a fairyland ablaze with floodlights centering on boat lovers entering from a dozen doors. The outboard exhibits were on the third floor, as they had been in the past. I was tempted to stop on the first floor to explore the latest model cruisers and sailboats, but

resisted. These exhibits as well as those of the sleek and highly polished mahogany motor boats on the second floor were for tomorrow. Tonight I had time only for the third floor to begin my search for the hydroplane I wanted.

The elevator opened on to a special display – a captivating, blue racing boat, proudly supporting a large two-cylinder outboard motor. Signs announced this was the record-breaking *No Foolin'* – the fastest outboard in the world, having set the world's record of 32 mph at St. Louis the summer before. Although I had read about *No Foolin'* in my Motor Boating magazine, and the boat's design and speed had influenced my desire to buy a hydroplane, I had never dreamt I'd be able to see and touch her in person. I decided she was the boat I had to have.

It was there I met Sir Charles Lipton, a British boat racer who was there with *No Foolin'*. I told him I wanted to buy the boat but the sales manager said if they did decide to sell the boat on Saturday, I'd have to buy the motor too. I didn't have enough money.

Sir Charles pulled out his gold pocket watch, saying it was time for his tea. Would I join him? He ordered tea. "Make sure it's Lipton," said this famous faced man on the Lipton Tea box to the waitress. I had lemonade. At the end of our conversation he asked if my father and I would meet him at *No Foolin'* on Saturday at 2. At the appointed hour I introduced my father to Sir Charles. They shook hands and began a conspiratorial conversation.

At last Dad said, "Sir Thomas has spoken to the Boyd Martin sales manager who wants you to come to their booth." There I learned that Sir Thomas had bought the motor. "And the boat, Mr. Adamson?" said the manager. "Sir Thomas has persuaded us to let your son buy *No Foolin'*. All that remains is the price, and since we won't have the expense of shipping it back to St. Louis, he can have it for \$125."

Thrilled by the huge price drop from the original \$350, without hesitation I said, "We'll take it!" And that's how the fastest outboard boat in the world came to Lake George.

Later that summer, Emily and I, always enterprising, went to the boat races near Lake George Village with a picnic basket filled with over a hundred peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. We rode around in *No Foolin'*, which we had painted black on the bottom half and bright yellow on top, yelling, "peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, 10 cents!" All through the races (for which Lake George became famous the year George Reis won the Gold Cup), people came to the fastest outboard motor boat in the world to buy our sandwiches. When we sold out we raced back home to make more.



*Beula takes No Foolin' for a spin.*

## Chapter IX

### *The Enduring Vision of Assembly Point*

I quote from an article in *The Glens Falls Times* about an extraordinary man, Harold Adamson, because he was my father. I was his oldest son, his second child of four, all of whom admired and loved him.

#### *W. Harold Adamson*

*With suddenness that shocked the community, death has taken W. Harold Adamson from family and friends ... To him, family and home always stood first, and he was a sincere and active worker and supporter in everything that was for the betterment and advancement of Glens Falls. He had served several terms as a Vestryman of the Church of the Messiah and he was deeply interested in the spiritual welfare of Glens Falls. Through his extensive real estate operations he expressed his faith in the future of the city.*

*In his business dealings Harold Adamson attained a reputation for fairness and honesty... He took a keen interest in subjects of public importance upon which he frequently expressed decided opinions... his advice was often sought on various subjects and he never betrayed a confidence. Among newspaper workers Mr. Adamson was held in high esteem. He knew a news story as well as any editor or reporter and his spirit of helpfulness gave encouragement to many beginners in newspaper work. Mrs. Adamson and her sons and daughters have lost a husband and father of the finest qualities and the community has lost a citizen of the best type.*

His untimely death in February of 1933 was a blow to me because I, at the age of 16, relied on him for what he believed and accomplished.

When the fateful day came when he collapsed onto the floor of our living room it was a shock and a terrible blow. I could only react by trying desperately and in the end unsuccessfully, to revive him by giving him artificial respiration, which I had learned at Boy Scouts earlier in life. I knew my mother, who loved him dearly, must be desperate, so I continued in spite of fatigue to try to bring him back to consciousness.

A wonderful friend who was a doctor came to our house in Broad Acres in response to a call from someone. But he immediately turned away after examining my father thoroughly saying, "It's no use; he's already gone."

My mother, sisters, younger brother, and I could hardly take in this sad and tragic moment.

What was so extraordinary about my father? It was the way he went about his work on Assembly Point, a beautiful mile-long isthmus jutting out into Lake George in the Adirondacks to Long Island, one of the largest in the lake. He made it his goal, along with several other men and women, to make Assembly Point, 12 miles north of Glens Falls a place where all could leave their respective businesses for a time of vacation and living simply with their families enjoying the beauty of the Lake itself and the mountains bordering its shores.

My mother took Harold's place as the President of the Lake George Assembly, to continue his devotion to Assembly Point. She worked from their home in Broad Acres in the winter and from her cottage on the Lake in the summer. As the new manager of the Point, she tried in every way to make it a place where many could congregate. Immediately after my father's death, Dr. Pasquera moved to the Point. He became a quiet advisor to my mother on matters important to the Point and figured prominently in visionary ideas that would impact the

Point favorably forever. I did not try to emulate my father but was aware of the way he tried to live helping others, achieving much; after his death I oversaw many of his real estate enterprises.

The vision held by Dr. Sanford, Harold and Ernestine Adamson, and Dr. Pasquera of a friendly community of private homes still holds. Amazingly, the center space, Otyokwa, remains forever wild.

## Epilogue

### *The Vision Continues into the 21st Century*

My father left off his narrative about life on Assembly Point in the mid 1930's. Technically this modest book should, for accuracy, be called "northern" Assembly Point in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. But it is a memoir as much as it is a personal history of what he knew and valued. For my father, writing this three years before his death, this was the story he needed to tell: those early decades in which his own family had a part in the development of Assembly Point. Where any recounting is incomplete I have attempted to pick up threads and fill in the spaces, and where recent developments have altered the Point, which Bob Adamson knew, I have tried to describe those forces.

This book gives us a flavor of the sublime summers experienced by many old-time Assembly Point families in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. Back then there was a close knit sense of a community of extended families, and the summer homes were called "camps" or "cottages." The water was pristine; kids walked around the dirt loop barefoot, and the woods were tick-free. It was exceptional to see a deer; paths were made through the woods to one another's houses lining them with fallen birch trees, and a mini golf course was created within Otyokwa before the homeowners' association began to worry about the legalities of playing in the interior.

In the 1960's there were only about eight year-round families. Assembly Point was developed and owned largely by Glens Falls families. Our aunts and uncles and all the adults and old timers, now gone, were self-appointed stewards of the Point. They kept the streams day-lighted by raking up decomposing leaves in the woods, and they took firewood from fallen trees for their wood stoves. Sitting out summer power outages with kerosene lamps, marshmallows and ghost stories--these were years of a waning, simple life slowly changing into a more affluent one.

As properties were sold off when the descendants of original families could neither afford nor agree to maintain them, the ownership on the Point gradually become more geographically dispersed. During this time the sense of familiarity and friendliness gave way to a suburban-style social disintegration, visible through the decline of the Assembly Point Association membership in the late 1990's.

The 1990s and early 21<sup>st</sup> century witnessed an exponential growth in rebuilding and overbuilding facilitated by variances given by the Town of Queensbury which permitted "McMansions." A kind of "great camp" mentality took hold as compared to the golden ideal in the original Otyokwa by-laws. Charles Adamson, Secretary of Otyokwa, wrote in a letter to the Lake George Association in 1990,

*You have to understand, and perhaps you already do, that Otyokwa is not a business, money-oriented corporation. Rather, it may be one of the earliest "land conservancy", anti-development organizations in the Lake George basin. In 1939, just over half a century ago, Robert W. Adamson, a lifetime resident of Assembly Point, arranged for property that had been a part of a real estate development corporation, to be reincorporated as undeveloped land under the ownership and protection of the abutting private property owners.*

The larger homes of the 1980s-90s brought increased tax revenues; a wealthier population could better pay the increased property taxes, which skyrocketed with the 1987 property assessment policies. Upscale properties required landscaping and increased the use of lawn fertilizers and pesticides, the sealcoating of driveways, and the replacement of seasonal docks with larger permanent docks. New York state building codes mandated that all new residences had to be permanent structures. The age of simplicity was over.

After 9/11 some who could afford second homes or a home away from New York City moved to Assembly Point, and year-round residency dramatically increased. In 2016 there were approximately 60 year-round families out of about 215 homes on Assembly Point. The many sales and resales or flipping of properties did not support a sense of neighborliness, and there was a loss of common history despite the increase of “year-rounders.” Development, sometimes in contravention of Town zoning rules, has put year-round stress on the land and the Lake. Building over wetlands has increased storm water runoff. Septic seepage and use of fertilizers have spawned algae blooms. All of these developments has contributed to declining water quality. Mother Nature has not been kind to Assembly Point. Natural disasters such as Hurricanes Irene and Sandy, which destroyed old growth timber, have exacerbated these environmental problems. With Hurricane Irene alone, the Point lost over 900 trees. They were our best defense against storm water runoff.

Ever since the unfortunate decision in the 1930s to place the Assembly Point Road on the shoreline, the Road has been “living on the edge”. Its precarious structural state can only grow worse. Besides worsening storm water runoff, it is in danger of collapsing onto docks in some places. Building on wetlands has resulted in increased flooding and icing of the Road. The Point is daily traversed by many oversized utility trucks



Assembly Point Road, circa 1900

which adversely affects the Road, has knocked out powerlines on occasion and creates congestion.

Likewise, growing high-speed boat traffic is eroding shorelines and jeopardizing other lake recreation such as swimming, fishing, kayaking, canoeing, and paddle boarding. While there have been accidents off of Assembly Point, none has recently been fatal as in other parts of the Lake. More and larger boats on the Lake could be attributed to the fact that lake property is out of the financial reach of many. Consequently, a boat docked at a marina is the affordable option.

But despite all these modern challenges there are connections and a sense of people coming together: the water quality coalition, the ladies' luncheon group, and our EMT squad – with Paul, John and Doug ready/able at a moment's notice to respond to an emergency. Walkers and joggers daily circle the Point for exercise and sociability. On any day you may find Arlene walking or Jennifer jogging or see Peter with Jilly, Rolf and Luise or the Andersons biking, Jay out with Aidan in his golf cart or Dave at the Shore Colony repairing docks. Otyokwa and

the Shore Colony Associations oversee specific areas of concern. It is inspiring to see the woods of the former Bellewood estate being restored to what they might have been.

Many of the returning baby boomers realize that they must be part of promoting better land use. The Point has a special history and a complex environmental situation. The AP-WQC conducts an annual swim-a-thon to see what is actually beneath these waters we drink and puts out a series of educational newsletters to encourage better stewardship and encourages green infrastructure projects such as rain gardens and buffers to absorb runoff.

We also have other returnees. Don't forget to look up when you are out walking to see our very own family of bald eagles. Recently they took up residence on Speaker Heck Island and along both Bay Parkway and Crossover Lanes. Hopefully, this is a harbinger of the future renewal of nature and our Lake. As we take up our responsibilities, like the founders of Assembly Point, we may start to think "Seven Generations Out" and become the latest stewards of the Lake intent on preserving this jewel of the Adirondacks.



Lisa Adamson, Chair of Assembly Point Water Quality Coalition Board

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